Hafa Adai!

SUNDAY

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 55 | FEBRUARY 24, 2008 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

BEH closes down Kinpanchi, six others. **PAGE 2**

Bill: MPLT income for indigenous-only programs. **PAGE 3**

Stealth bomber crashes in Guam

In this photo provided by the U.S. Air Force a B-2 bomber is seen during a training exercise near McGuire Airforce Base, N.J., in this March 23, 2001 photo. AP

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—A B-2 stealth bomber crashed Saturday at an air base in Guam, but both pilots ejected safely and were in good condition, the Air Force said.

It was the first crash of a B-2 bomber, said Capt. Sheila Johnston, a spokeswoman for Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.

Thick, black smoke could be seen billowing from the wreckage at Andersen Air Force Base, said Jeanne Ward, a resident in the northern village of Yigo who was on the base visiting her husband.

Ward said she didn't witness the crash but noticed a rising plume of smoke behind the base's air control tower.

She said crowds began to gather as emergency vehicles arrived. "Everybody was on their cell phones, and the first thing everyone wanted to know was did the pilots make it out in time," she said.

A board of officers will investigate the accident.

See 2 PILOTS

Japan's oldest person dies at 113

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's oldest person has died at a hospital in southwestern Japan, her nursing home said Saturday. She was 113.

Tsuneyo Toyonaga, who became the country's oldest person last August, died Friday, days after she was transferred to a nearby hospital because she lost her appetite, said Masuko Yamamoto, deputy director of the Yume-no-Sato nursing home in the southern city of Nangoku.

See OLDEST on Page 4

Toyonaga

Sablan: Stop using public funds for 'donations'

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

A freshman lawmaker has taken issue with the legislators' practice of using public funds for "donations."

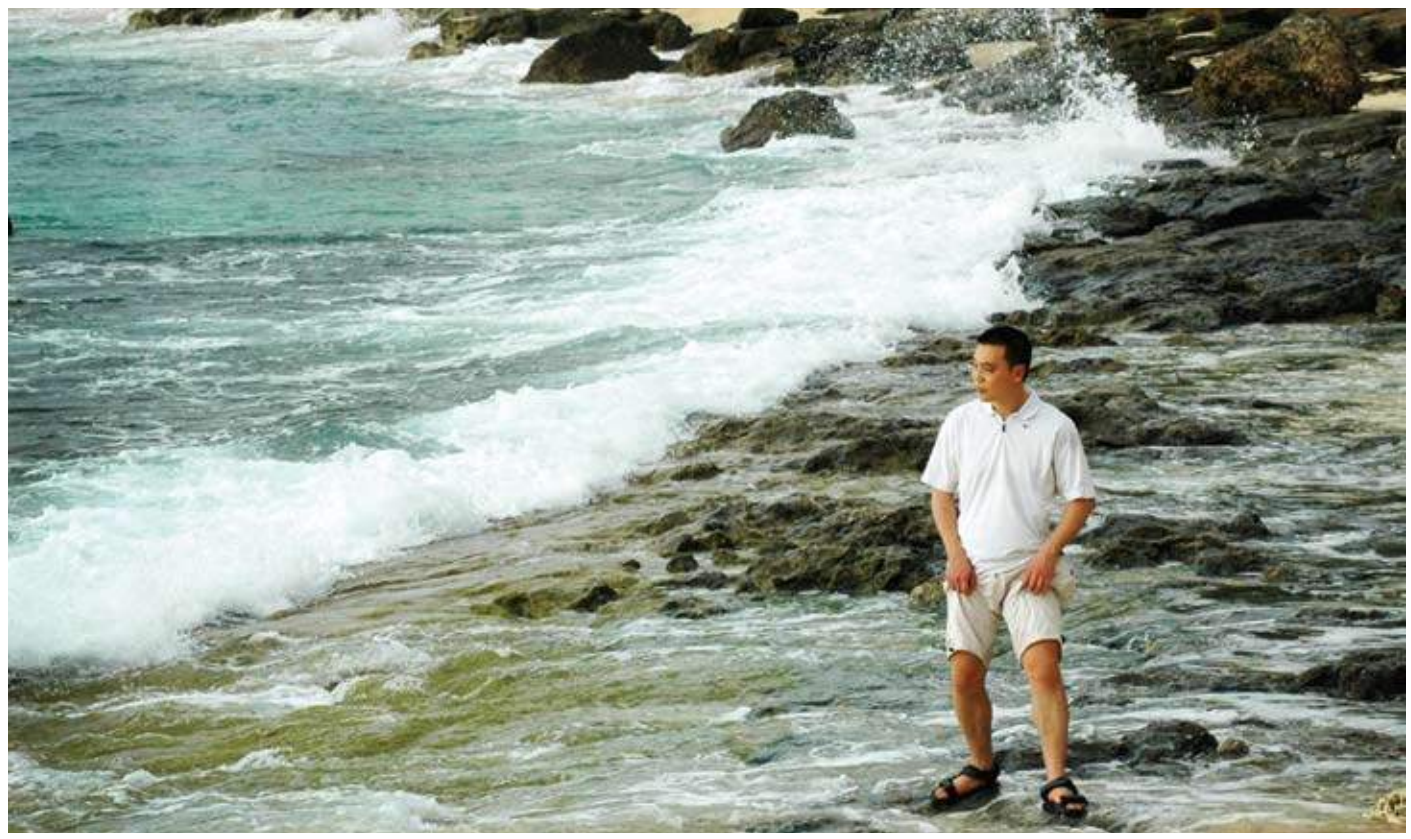
Rep. Tina Sablan said that the Legislature could reduce its own budget if members stopped "donating" money using taxpayer dollars.

"My position is that if we donate money or volunteer our time for any cause, we should do so out of our own pockets and on our own time—not in our official capacities as members of the House, but in our private capacities as members of this community. In other words, 'donations' using public funds are not donations at all, but an unfair and selective allocation of taxpayer dollars," she said.

She added that by spending time and money on municipal services, legislators "are perpetuating the inefficient and costly practice of duplicating government functions and inadequately appropriating funds to the agencies that are tasked with providing those same services."

See LAWMAKER on Page 4

Sablan



TINIAN TOURIST JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A tourist spends his afternoon checking out the clear blue waters of Tachogna Beach on the beautiful and tranquil island of Tinian.

OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Is the CNMI government doing enough to pursue corruption cases and other white-collar crimes on the islands?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

The Bard in Prison

Today's Elizabethan history lesson: learning the pavane, a 16th-century processional dance involving mincing steps and courtly bows.

GOOD LIFE...Page 12

Dog Rescue

It began with a simple act of kindness to save an abused, injured dog from becoming one more victim in the Iraq war.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

Oscar Season

If there's anything Hollywood loves, it's a glamorous party–and it doesn't get more glamorous than the Academy Awards.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 22

Around the CNMI

BEH closes down Kinpanchi, six others

The Bureau of Environmental Health closed down six establishments and one illegal roadside vendor in the last five months due to serious violations of health and sanitation standards.

The establishments that were ordered closed last month included the Lucky BBQ in Susupe, which was shuttered on Jan. 3, 2008; Mr. Fan Yao Xing at the Sugar King Park, closed down on Jan. 11, 2008; the Kinpachi Restaurant in Garapan, closed down on Jan. 31, 2008, and the S-Mart in Gualo Rai, closed down on Jan. 31, 2008. S-Mart, however, was re-opened on the same day, according to the bureau.

Other establishments that were also ordered closed included Crystal Water Manufacture in Papago, closed down on Sept. 19, 2007; illegal roadside vendor Bolin Xue (AAX 939, closed on Nov. 5, 2007; illegal roadside vendor ABY 048, closed on Nov. 5, 2007; and the Jin Joo Restaurant in Chalan Kanoa, shuttered on Dec. 19, 2007.

Other drinking and eating establishments that were inspected and their respective grades are as follows:

Grade "A"

1. Managaha Beach Restaurant, Managaha Island
2. Triple J Five Star Wholesale & Retail, Lower Base
3. The Water Company, Lower Base
4. Pacific Trading, Puerto Rico
5. Marianas Restaurant, Navy Hill
6. Saipan Happy Market II, Gualo Rai
7. Jolly Kat Catering, Gualo Rai
8. Café de K, Garapan
9. Muumin Mura Restaurant, Garapan
10. Han's Restaurant, Garapan
11. Museum Café & Snack Bar, Garapan
12. Hafa Adai Beach Hotel (outlets), Garapan
13. Jin Hui Store, Garapan
14. Quality Distributor Wholesale, Chalan Lau Lau
15. Wallace Theater Snack Bar, San Jose
16. Truong's Restaurant, Susupe
17. Sun Palace Snack Bar, Susupe
18. Tamaya Gift Shop, Susupe
19. Steven's Catering, Chalan Kanoa
20. Jed Retail Store, Chalan Kanoa
21. Payless Super Market & outlets, Chalan Kanoa
22. Holiday Mini Mart, Chalan Kanoa
23. Health Mart II, Chalan Piao
24. Subway, Chalan Piao
25. Han Nam Market & Butcher, Koblerville
26. Gusto Product, Fina Sisu
27. M.E. Yummy Catering, San Vicente

Grade "B"

1. Tasty Chinese Restaurant, Garapan
2. Yeon Byon II Restaurant, San Antonio
3. Terry Store, Susupe
4. Al Lian Store, As Lito

Grade "C"

1. Susan's Catering, Chalan Lau Lau

The bureau said, though, that there may have been some changes already to these grades since this information was released. For updated information, call the bureau at 664-4870 or fax 664-4871. ***(BEH)***

DIVING LESSONS JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Tourists learn to scuba dive on the pool of the Palms Resort in San Roque yesterday. The former Hotel Nikko Saipan is now owned by the United Micronesia Development Association.

MHS preps for College & Career Prep Day

The Hopwood Junior High School will be having a College & Career Prep Day on March 18, 2008, to educate students about future careers options.

Formerly known as Parent Takeover-Day, the theme for this year's College & Career Prep Day is "Career Exposure Leads to Lifestyle!"

The mission behind this event is to jump start:

■ The student's exploration in learning about career clusters (work environments) and about career decision making

■ The student's meaning for school which is the discovered relationship between their school work and the working world (learn to learn and learn to work)

■ The need for all students to have a (ongoing) plan for the future so that they achieve the right lifestyle fit (learn to live)

Currently, student government and other active student leaders are encouraged and supported by their parent/guardians, team teachers, and counselor to identify the kind of work environments they may be interested in1. Once they have identified a work environment, students are the ones to invite a person from that environment to come and be a guest presenter in their class. To confirm a presenter, the student follows up with a confirmation letter. Presenters are also given a handy sheet guide on what to share about their job. This includes interesting facts about the job itself, the training involved, and the skill sets needed to be successful.

Homeroom student representatives or other identified active students help with overall word-of-mouth broadcasting and promotion awareness on campus. Each one will take the lead in ensuring that all school teams have at least one or two presenters scheduled for every 50-minute class period.

Students come on campus following their normal class schedule. But, once inside the subject classroom, the format begins with a 10-minute share by the subject teacher about his/her university alma mater. Students get a glimpse into college life from the perspective of their mentor teacher. This is followed by the guest presenter(s). Each presenter has no more than 20-minutes to give a snapshot view of his/her field followed by brief Q&A. In order for the students to enjoy as many different outlooks as they possibly can in a day, no special equipment or set up for presenters will be permitted.

An aspect about this event is that students perform many facets of public relations and marketing. They also take ownership over their teams whether they promote open clusters or theme related clusters. In addition, they "buy in" to the kinds of presenters that come on campus. The work environment interests vary across the student population. Some of those interests include:

■ Hospitality & Tourism: Front desk, Room service, Sports & Recreation, Food & Beverage, and Hotel management

■ Marketing, Sales & Services: Entrepreneurship & Management, Business Incubator, and Chamber of Commerce

■ Environmental and Agricultural Systems: Department of Lands and Natural Resources, NMC CREES, Fish & Wildlife, and Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

■ Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Systems: Architecture, Construction, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Commercial airlines

■ Communication and Information Systems: Information technology and Network managers, Software specialist, and Data technicians

■ Human Services and Resources: Law enforcement, Private law offices, Courts, Corrections, Local public administration, Federal government positions, Human resource management, Educators, and Trainers

■ Health Sciences: Diagnostic, Therapeutic, and Supportive services, Health information

Parent/guardians, teachers, and counselors are resources for students in practicing proper phone etiquette, formal language appropriate for extending invitations, conducting information interviews, and other related special event planning. ***(PR)***

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Bill: MPLT income for indigenous-only programs

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Income from investments by the Marianas Public Land Trust will be used exclusively for programs benefiting the indigenous if a Senate bill becomes law.

Under Senate Bill 16-21, sponsored by Sen. Joseph Mendiola, funds transferred from MPLT to the general fund will be deposited into a special account that will be available for local appropriation by the respective senatorial delegations.

One half of the funds should be allocated to Saipan. Tinian and Rota will share the other half.

The money will then be used for programs and services, such as utilities subsidy, scholarships, employment training programs, community development programs, and health programs, exclusively for people who are of Northern Marianas descent.

According to the Constitution, the Department of Public Lands is tasked with managing leases of public lands on behalf of the people of Northern Marianas descent. After deducting administrative costs from the collected fees, MPLA should transfer the balance to MPLT. The trust then invests the money. Income earned from those investments is transferred to the general fund for appropriation by the Legislature.

In his bill, Mendiola said that MPLT was "established to invest assets derived from the use of public lands on behalf of and for benefit the people of the Commonwealth who are of Northern Marianas descent." Thus, he said, only the indigenous should benefit from MPLT's income.

MPLT recently paid $2.232 million to the general fund. The Legislature is currently considering whether to use nearly the full amount to reimburse Aetna Global Benefits for so-called "runoff claims," or medical claims incurred before the government insurance plan was privatized.

Aetna, which runs the government group health and life insurance plan, has threatened to terminate the program if the firm is not reimbursed soon for the runoff claims. Government employees will lose insurance coverage if the program is canceled.

GHLI's old third party administrative services agreement with Aetna expired on that date. On Nov. 1, 2007, the GHLI program was privatized and awarded to Aetna, through the competitive bidding process.

The privatized program only covers all new claims arising from medical services rendered after Nov. 1. The CNMI government is now liable for all costs incurred before then.

But Aetna, with the understanding that it would be reimbursed, paid the clinics a total of $2.4 million in runoff claims.

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Six Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has raised the red flag on six beach sites and is warning the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

The affected sites are the DPW Channel Bridge, S. Puerto Rico Dump, Dai-Ichi Drainage, Hafa-Adai Hotel, Hafa-Adai Drainage, and Sugar Dock.

DEQ said that samples collected from these locations contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

DEQ analyzes water samples collected from Saipan's recreational beaches and storm drainages every Wednesday. This week, the division took samples from 38 locations.

DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ at 664-8500 with any questions about this. ***(DEQ)***

Postmaster General sends advice to prevent ID theft

WASHINGTON, D.C—The U.S. Postal Service began delivering an important message from Postmaster General John Potter this week to every household in America. The letter provides advice to protect against identity theft.

Identity theft is one of America's fastest growing crimes, costing billions of dollars each year. Victims can spend months or years and thousands of dollars cleaning up their financial records and restoring their good names.

A recent Federal Trade Commission survey on identity theft determined that only 2 percent of all victims reported that the theft was connected to the mail. But even 2 percent is too much, Potter said.

"We will keep working to make the mail even more secure and strive to reduce that percentage to zero," he said. "Your identity is valuable. If someone steals it to commit fraudulent acts, it can affect every aspect of your life—your credit standing, your ability to buy a car or house, even get a job or medical care."

The Postal Service teamed up with the FTC to provide tips and tools to help Americans protect their identities and information on actions they can take if they become victims of identity theft. The FTC brochure, "Deter. Detect. Defend. Fighting Back Against Identity Theft," is included in the mailing.

Americans depend on the security of the mail and they trust the U.S. Postal Service, above all other federal agencies, to protect their privacy. The Postal Service has ranked first among all federal agencies for the past three years, according to national surveys by the Ponemon Institute

In addition to educating consumers about identity theft, the Postal Service, through its Postal Inspection Service, and the FTC are leading the fight against this crime.

The FTC and the Postal Service offer the following tips to help protect against identity theft:

- Check credit card statements, bank documents and financial reports every month for unauthorized activity.
- Protect Social Security numbers. Don't carry Social Security cards in wallets or write the number on a check.
- Don't provide personal information over the phone or the internet.
- Never click on links sent in unsolicited email messages.
- Keep personal information in a secure place at home.

More information on identity theft and information on reporting the crime can be found at these websites:

- U.S. Postal Inspection Service (usps.com/postalinspectors)
- The Federal Trade Commission (www.consumer.gov/idtheft)
- The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (www.fdic.gov/consumers)
- The Department of Justice (www.ojp.gov/topics/identitytheft.htm) ***(PR)***

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Sasamoto resists the catch of baby wrasses

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A couple of weeks ago, award-winning, free dive spear fisherman Felix Sasamoto spotted two baby Napoleon wrasses at the Obyan Beach about 56 feet below the water but resisted to the attempt to catch them.

Sasamoto, who caused quite a stir in the community when he caught two giant Napoleon Wrasses recently, said that, upon spotting the two baby wrasses, he just watched them and the two also stared back.

"For the record, I could have made my way through and shot the bigger one first but I said to myself, 'Nope, not today'," Sasamoto said.

Sasamoto described the wrasses as juveniles since their color was still all white. Adult wrasses have bright colors.

Sasamoto also shared that his fishing buddy, Tony Roberts, spotted another wrasse.

"So there you go. You call those rare? Like I said before, they stay in deeper area, and they are not rare," said Sasamoto.

Sasamoto's recent catch of the two giant Napoleon wrasses spurred several phone calls and letters to the editor voicing support or opposition to Sasamoto's catch.

According to the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Fisheries Research Section supervisor Michael Trianni, the Napolean wrasse is not a rare species in the CNMI.

"It has in fact been observed throughout the CNMI, and is considered 'uncommon.' In most cases, as Felix stated, the large ones tend to stay deeper, at the edge of free-diving range. At DFW, we have observed many sub-adults in the lagoon," he said.

Trianni said that Sasamoto's feat—catching the Napoleon wrasses by free diving to 43 feet—"is rather encouraging."

"Perhaps the management measures that are in place are paying some dividends. The intent behind the banning of scuba-spear was to provide fish with a refuge by depth, recognizing that there are not a lot of free-divers with the capabilities of someone like Felix," Triannia said.

"This action, in time, would slowly replenish the diveable fishing depths. We essentially created a marine protected depth zone throughout the CNMI, for those fish that are not primarily harvested by hook and line, such as the wrasse," said Trianni.

Sasamoto said he does not scuba tank. The kind of diving he does is called free diving—essentially holding one's breath and diving to great depths—which he had learned from his father.

"To those group of people that [criticized] me, you could have called me and asked me nicely to do or have some kind of management plan before attacking me," Sasamoto said.

Mayor pushes mining of lava rocks on Pagan

Northern Islands Mayor Valentin Taisakan has asked the CNMI government to look into the possibility of mining not just pozzolan, but also lava rocks, on Pagan.

The mayor, in a letter to Public Lands Secretary John S. Del Rosario, said the government should assess the "market potentials" of Pagan's lava rock as a construction material.

Citing a field survey and study by EFC Engineers and Architects, Taisakan said that the huge deposits of lava rocks exist on Pagan, covering about half the area of the air strip on the island.

He said lava rocks can be used a non-skid material for road pavement, airport runways, and similar projects. They can also be used for the manufacturing of cement bricks and blocks that produces natural color of the lava rock. They are used in home and building construction projects.

"Like the pozzolan, I believe that we should look into the Pagan's lava rock market potentials," Taisakan said. "Because of the abundance of these volcanic products, they probably will and still can attract serious investors to mine them; and that will definitely bring fresh revenue and resources needed to support our government operations." ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Bush cutters, mowers urged to be careful

The 10th Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council is advising operators of tractor mower, brush cutting machinery and mechanized chain saw to always exercise caution while operating these machineries to avoid causing injuries to other people passing by.

The municipal council said that its advisory is addressed to those whose work is performed under the auspices of the CNMI or local government agencies, including private contractors. This particularly applies to those who are operating along major highways and secondary roadways, including walkways or pathways.

The municipal council said that these operators should always exercise due diligence in taking every necessary precautionary safety measure against causing serious injuries to people and properties passing by or in close proximity to the affected public premises or private work sites. ***(PR)***

NEWS BRIEFING JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial leads a press conference at the Department of Labor office in San Antonio last week. Also in photo are Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas, Department of Labor deputy secretary Cinta M. Kaipat, Labor Director Barry Hirshbein, Labor Employment Services director Alfred Pangelinan, Division of Employment Services supervisor Alice I. Concepcion, LIIDS computer specialist 3 Tom Torres, and webmaster Ron Smith.

Lawmaker scores wasteful use of public funds

From Page 1

Lawmakers are commonly approached for donations of picnic tables, tents, water, other in-kind contributions, and money. These requests come from youth centers, schools, nonprofit organizations, families who have lost loved ones, and private citizens.

"Usually, in return for a 'donation,' I am offered special recognition as a 'sponsor'–my name and position as a member of the House on a banner, for instance, or expressions of gratitude at regular intervals over a P.A. system at a public event," Sablan said.

Sablan said she had also received numerous requests for jobs, mostly from prospective community workers who offer to erect tents, build tables, paint bus stops and trash cans, and attend funerals in her name. She had declined all of these requests.

"It is not that these are not worthy causes. It is not that I do not care about children, or about bereaved families, or about keeping the neighborhoods in my precinct clean. For me, saying no to requests for donations is a matter of principle. It is about honoring the public trust, focusing on our constitutionally mandated responsibilities as legislators, and expending money wisely and with our priorities firmly in place," Sablan said.

She argued that the public money that legislators spend on "donations" to schools and youth centers, for instance, is money that should be appropriated to the Public School System and the youth centers themselves. The public money that legislators spend on municipal services such as neighborhood cleanups and park maintenance is money that should be appropriated to the agencies that are already mandated to carry out those responsibilities.

"I firmly believe that if legislators would focus on their primary duty to enact good laws and allocate public funds fairly and responsibly, the Commonwealth would not need a full-time Legislature, and it would certainly not need such an expensive one," she said.

Under the Constitution, on top of salaries, each individual legislator can receive a maximum amount of $155,000 for their discretionary funds. Legislators from Tinian and Rota can receive up to $5,000 a month for their subsistence allowances, and so can senators from Saipan. Presiding officers for the House and Senate can receive up to $400,000 each.

Mificpa hosts tax seminar

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants has invited David Burger to conduct a tax seminar on March 1, 2008, Saturday, from 8am to 12pm, at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Burger is the chairman of CNMI Board of Accountancy.

The topics will include an overview of the preparation of Form 1040CM-Individual Income Tax Return and Form 1120CM - Corporate Income Tax Return.

Also, recent updates and developments prescribed by the CNMI Revenue & Taxation as well as the United States Internal Revenue Code on Corporate Taxation will be discussed.

All accountants, members and non-members are encouraged to attend this current and informative seminar. The managers and other professional individuals who seek to get more information with these tax returns are also welcome.

A seminar fee of $10 for members and $12 for non-members is required. Proceeds will go to selected charitable/civic organization.

For registration, call Irene at 287-7997, Lois at 235-9322 or Jho at 285-2812. ***(Mificpa)***

2 pilots eject safely from B-2 bomber

From Page 1

Each B-2 bomber costs about $1.2 billion to build. All 21 stealth bombers are based at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, but the Air Force has been rotating several of them through Guam since 2004, along with B-1 and B-52 bombers.

The rotations are designed to boost the U.S. security presence in the Asia-Pacific region while other U.S. forces diverted to fight in the Middle East.

The B-2 was first publicly displayed in 1988 and took its first flight a year later. The first bomber was delivered to Whiteman in 1993.

The accident occurred 11 days after a Navy plane crashed into the ocean about 20 miles (30 kilometers) northeast of Guam's Ritidian Point. Four aircrew members ejected from the EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft and were rescued by helicopter.

Guam is a U.S. territory 3,700 miles (5,000 kilometers) southwest of Hawaii.

Oldest person in Japan dies

From Page 1

Born on May 21, 1894, Toyonaga had been in the nursing home the last 12 years. She was a darling among caretakers and fellow residents, Yamamoto said.

"She was dozing off most of the day recently but when she was awake she used to enjoy singing children's songs. Once she started singing she wouldn't stop until we all got tired and had to stop her," she said.

Toyonaga is survived by five children and 10 grandchildren, Kyodo News agency said.

Kaku Yamanaka, born on Dec. 11, 1894, is now Japan's oldest person, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry. She lives in a nursing home in Aichi, central Japan.

The number of Japanese living beyond 100 has almost quadrupled in the past 10 years and is soon expected to surpass 28,000.

Japan has one of the world's longest average life spans - a factor often attributed to a healthy diet rich in fish and rice. In 2006, Japanese women set a new record for life expectancy at 85.81 years, while men live an average of about 79 years.

Edna Parker of Shelbyville, Ind., is recognized as the world's oldest person at age 114, according to The Guinness Book of Records. She was born on April 20, 1893.

Would you like to become an FBI agent?

It's a good time to find out: The Federal Bureau of Investigation is hiring nearly 1,000 new agents this year.

Being an FBI agent is a tough, demanding job—but plenty rewarding, too. You'll experience:

■ the excitement of chasing terrorists, spies, and criminals, at home and abroad;

■ the stimulation of thinking, analyzing, and solving;

■ the comfort of belonging to a small, family-like government agency, with excellent benefits; and

■ the very real satisfactions of public service.

So, let's see how ready you are to become a special agent of the FBI. Can you answer "yes" to ALL of the following questions?

■ I'm a U.S. citizen or a citizen of the Northern Mariana Islands.

■ I'm at least 23 years old but no older than 37.

■ I've never been convicted of a felony.

■ I have a valid driver's license.

■ I have a four-year degree from an accredited college or university.

■ I have at least three years of professional work experience.

■ I can pass a drug test and haven't violated the FBI drug policy.

■ I've never defaulted on a student loan insured by the U.S. government.

■ I can qualify in one of five entry areas: accounting; computer science/information technology; language; law; or diversified.

■ I'm in good health and in good shape—see our physical requirements webpage for details—and check out the video!

■ I'm available to work anywhere in the world.

Still with us? Then go to the FBI Jobs website—www.fbijobs.gov—and apply straightaway! Remember, you'll be competing with thousands of other candidates, so put your best foot forward.

If selected, there are two more hurdles you'll need to cross:

First, because of the sensitive nature of the work, you'll need to earn a top secret clearance from the FBI. That requires passing a full background investigation, which includes a polygraph exam, a drug urinalysis test, credit and record checks, and extensive interviews with family, friends, colleagues, etc.

Second, once you pass the background, you must make it through 22 weeks of intensive training that tests both your physical and mental mettle. Simply put: if you don't graduate from this training, you can't become an agent!

Are there other job opportunities in the FBI besides being an agent? Absolutely. In fact, the bureau plans to bring on board more than 2,000 support professionals this year, including 500 intelligence analysts. It is also looking for specialized skills in information technology, management, engineering, accounting, electronics, human resources, administration, public affairs, and international relations, to name a few.

The FBI is hiring not just at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., but across the nation, including at the Criminal Justice Information Services Division in West Virginia. And once you're in the Bureau, there are many opportunities to move up (many jobs have career ladders) and to move around (from job to job and from city to city).

Visit the FBI Jobs website often for much more information about working for the bureau—including opportunities for students. ***(FBI)***

SHE SELLS SEA SHELLS JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

A mother and her child spend the late afternoon picking up shells on Pakpak Beach in San Antonio.

Guam resident pleads guilty to $750K tax refund scheme

A Guam resident pleaded guilty yesterday to charges of tax fraud arising from the fraudulent filing of income tax refunds, a scheme similar to the one perpetrated by several individuals on Saipan last year.

U.S. Leonardo M. Rapadas and IRS special agent Kenneth J. Hines said yesterday that Bihno M. Tanaka submitted before the U.S. District Court for Guam a guilty plea on a charge alleging tax fraud. Tanaka pleaded guilty before Judge Joaquin V.E. Manibusan to aiding and assisting in the filing of false and fraudulent federal income tax returns.

Beginning Feb. 1, 2007 and continuing until April 30, 2007, Tanaka, born in 1964, a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia and a resident of Guam, assisted other individuals to prepare and present for filing to the U. S. Internal Revenue Service false, fictitious, and fraudulent federal income tax returns on behalf of taxpayers who were residents of Guam in order to obtain fraudulent tax refunds on their behalf. Tanaka knew that residents of Guam who earned income on Guam were required to file their income tax returns with the Government of Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation.

During the entire period, Tanaka filed with the IRS approximately 218 U. S. Individual and Joint Federal Income Tax Returns (Forms 1040 and Forms 1040A) for the calendar year 2006 which contained false and fictitious information. Most of the returns claimed the Earned Income Credit, a subsidy for low-income families, which falsely inflated the amount of the tax refunds. Most of the returns also used false mainland U.S. addresses to appear eligible for the EIC and income tax refunds. Tanaka knew that none of the returns actually entitled any of the Guam resident taxpayers to claim EIC and receive a federal tax refund from the IRS.

False refund claim amounts cited as examples in the Plea Agreement range from $3,220 to $8,143. In total, Tanaka was responsible for the submission of fraudulent tax returns to the IRS seeking approximately $756,312 in federal income tax refunds. In exchange for his participation in the tax fraud scheme, Tanaka charged and received fees from each Guam taxpayer ranging from $0 to $500 per false tax return.

"Our special agents used their investigative and financial expertise to detect and hold accountable a predatory tax return preparer, who operated on Guam, just like they did last year with several other return preparers who conducted similar schemes on Saipan," said Kenneth J. Hines, the IRS special agent in charge of the Seattle Field Office, which oversees Guam and the NMI. "This individual attempted to illegally pad his wallet, at the expense of the United States taxpayers, through lies and deception. IRS Criminal Investigation will not sit on its hands and allow that to occur."

"I am pleased with the continued success of this investigation into tax fraud in Guam." said U.S. Attorney Rapadas. "We stand ready to prosecute anyone who would put a taxpayer at risk for a quick—and very dangerous—profit."

The maximum statutory penalties for the offense to which Tanaka pleaded guilty include: three years imprisonment; a fine of $250,000; and a term of supervised release of one year.

Rapadas credits the special agents of the Internal Revenue Service—Criminal Investigation for their investigation of this case in conjunction with the Government of Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation Criminal Investigation Branch. ***(PR)***

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 55

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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EDITORIAL

That '70s Show

Remember the "misery index"? During the frustrating 1970s, economists used it as a shorthand measure of the pain imposed by simultaneously rising consumer prices and joblessness. Simply adding up the inflation and unemployment rates roughly quantified "stagflation," a phenomenon that defied the economic theory under which inflation and recession were supposed to be mutually exclusive. The misery index averaged 16.27 during President Jimmy Carter's term, peaking at a post-1948 high of 21.98 in the middle of his unsuccessful 1980 reelection campaign. The best index since then was 5.74 in April 1998, under President Bill Clinton. It's been creeping up since, hitting 9.2 in January. The word "stagflation" is once again on the lips of serious economists.

And the culprit is not just the current economic slowdown, which has increased the ranks of the jobless, but inflation—the dragon from the '70s that seemed to have been slain by a combination of the Federal Reserve's tight-money policies and low prices for globally traded commodities such as oil. The inflation rate hit 4.3 percent last month, higher than it's been in almost two decades—and, interestingly enough, only a tiny bit below the 4.36 percent rate that prompted President Richard Nixon to declare wage and price controls in mid-1971.

As in the 1970s, much of today's price rise is driven by oil, which has pierced the $100 per barrel level. Even "core inflation," which excludes food and energy, is now running at 2.5 percent, however. This is slightly less than the 2006 annual rate but still well above the Federal Reserve's target of 1 to 2 percent. Small wonder, then, that members of the Fed's board of governors have begun emphasizing inflation-fighting in their recent public comments. At the Federal Open Market Committee's most recent meeting, three weeks ago, more rate cuts were entertained, but some members spoke of a "rapid reversal" of them once the economy perks up.

Comparisons with the 1970s should not be overdone. Among the differences between now and then is that labor unions are much weaker today and are thus less able to bargain for higher wages, which companies pass on to consumers. The slowing economy should reduce inflation, in part because falling demand for oil will help moderate its price. Still, the talk of stagflation illustrates what was obvious even before the Fed began using rate cuts to stave off recession: U.S. monetary authorities have relatively little room to maneuver. The worry is that the economy will be sluggish in 2008—even though the Fed has pumped in all the cheaper money it could provide consistent with its anti-inflation mission, and maybe a little bit more.

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Why can't a teen see the ballot?

By AVIS THOMAS-LESTER
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

I grew up hearing my mother talk about the civil rights movement. She grew up in Jim Crow Mississippi and was at the 1963 March on Washington. She taught me to love my history, respectfully defy authority, defend my rights and honor those whose blood had paid for them.

So when my son Zachary was born, I decided to teach him the same way. At 14, he can tell you who Frederick Douglass was and what civil rights activist Ella Baker did. He knows that the Women's Political Council of Montgomery, Ala., was just as responsible for the 1955 bus boycott as was the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Zachary's heritage education has included going to concerts, lectures, museums, historic sites—and, for every election since his birth in 1993, trips to the polls to see the electoral process up close. I have pictures of him in a stroller, giggling and chewing on a book, as we waited in line to vote in 1994. When I was hassled about taking him with me to the voting machine in Upper Marlboro, Md., in 2002, I wrote a news story about the injustice of barring children from polling booths. I heard later that the law was changed.

But last week, a poll official stopped Zachary from accompanying me to the voting machine to cast my ballot in the Maryland primary.

"He's only 14," I said. "He's going with me."

"Children over the age of 12 can't go to the voting machine," she replied.

"There had to be some mistake," I thought. "The law was changed. We always do this. He's a young black man. I want him to see a ballot for president with the names of a black man and a woman on it!"

A call to the Board of Elections disclosed that Maryland still bars children 13 and over from joining a parent in the voting booth. Maryland's first law on the subject was passed in 1977, barring children over 5, officials said. A baby could have accompanied me, but an honors student who will be eligible to vote for the next president was prohibited.

Too bad we don't live in the District. "We have no law that prevents children from going to vote with a parent," said Alice Miller, executive director of the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics, who added that her now-grown son and daughter always accompanied her husband to vote. Virginia lets children 15 and under accompany a parent, according to Rosanna Bencoach of the Virginia State Board of Elections. Better, but not good enough.

Experts said they had no idea why anyone in a country that has long suffered from voter apathy would limit children's access to the polls. Bencoach wrote in an e-mail that she found notes suggesting that the original Virginia law "was primarily to accommodate parents with young children and infants."

The resulting limitations now deprive families of a powerful civics lesson. Lawrence Guyot, who fought against segregation and for voting rights as a young activist in Mississippi in the 1960s, told me that he and his wife Monica, also a civil rights activist, always took their children with them to vote. Guyot encourages families to treat voting as an important family event—to vote together, even to take a picture and send it to other relatives.

"It is totally irrational to have an age limitation on taking children to vote," he told me. "Taking them to the polls drives home the lesson that voting is the best way to bring about political change, and that is the people's right."

On Tuesday, as I cast my ballot alone, I simmered at the injustice and stupidity of it all. Zachary sat nearby, quietly reading a book on Nazis for a school project. A poll volunteer who had seen the whole thing tried to make things better as we left. "This is for you," he said, handing Zachary an "I Voted!" sticker. "You brought Mom out here, didn't you?"

The sticker, and a lunch of cheeseburger quesadillas, fixed Zachary's mood. With characteristic teen-age disdain, he called the whole thing "dumb." "I've always gone to vote," he said. "Why would anyone want to stop me just because I'm a teen-ager? They should be happy that I want to go."

My mother would have done something. I can see her leading a group of her mother friends to march on Annapolis, Md. Maybe I'll do that later. For now, I'll just hope that somebody with children and some sense of civic responsibility will read this and act, so that someday Zachary can bring his teen-ager with him to the voting machine.

Avis Thomas-Lester is a Washington Post *reporter based in Prince George's County, Md. thomaslestera@washpost.com.*

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The state of the jihad, as he might see it

Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell warned the Senate intelligence committee earlier this month that al-Qaida is regrouping, not retreating—and boosting its capacities for launching another attack inside the United States. So how does the war on terrorism look these days through our enemies' eyes? Here's an informed—albeit fictional—guess.

By MICHAEL SCHEUER
Special to The Washington Post

Scheuer was chief of the CIA's Osama bin Laden unit from 1996 to 1999. His latest book is Marching Toward Hell: America and Islam After Iraq.

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate:

Brothers, I write to give my view of how far we have, with God's help, traveled since declaring war on the United States in 1996. Al-Qaida has today become all that we hoped for when we formed it in 1988: a vanguard organization whose main mission is not fighting, but rather inciting and inspiring young Muslims to arm themselves and defend Islam from the American crusaders, their Zionist offspring and their agent regimes in the Muslim world, especially the House of Saud. We must thank God for the steady flow of young Muslims to our ranks, men who now make the forces of al-Qaida and its allies larger, more intelligent and more pious than ever.

By God's grace, al-Qaida's incitement has met with wondrous success; Western polls show that hundreds of millions of Muslims now believe that U.S. foreign policy aims to undermine or destroy Islam. Ironically, Washington itself has become a major inciter of Muslim hatred for the United States, simply by maintaining policies—slaughtering the innocent in Iraq, propping up the House of Saud and Hosni Mubarak's tyranny in Egypt, blindly backing the pretender state of the Jews—that drive Muslims into our ranks. Not all these Muslims are ready to take up arms, but even the limited number who are now fighting have proved more than enough to stymie U.S. plans in Afghanistan and Iraq and to support the jihad in Algeria, Lebanon, Thailand, Somalia, Gaza and Europe.

And so, even with limited numbers, al-Qaida appears to Muslims as a huge, rising and conquering army. Just as important, Americans have been taught by their leaders to see al-Qaida behind every rock and tree, ready to pounce. American leaders, in effect, now terrorize ordinary Americans, making Washington appear to be the enemy of its own people's civil liberties.

This all gives us confidence in our plan to defeat America, by bleeding it into bankruptcy and tempting it to spread out its forces.

Brothers, the amount of money that Washington spends on wars to murder Muslims and on pointless "homeland security" measures is staggering, with no end in sight. The war in Iraq alone is costing $12 billion per month. Bush is also burning money to deploy troops to Africa, under a new Pentagon command created to steal the continent's oil. And after America's Iraq "surge," U.S. generals cannot scrape up the few thousand troops they would need to fight our Taliban brothers in Afghanistan because Washington's NATO allies refuse to send reinforcements.

Thanks be to God, brothers, America is hemorrhaging money and ruining its military by trying to fight al-Qaida's mujaheddin wherever they appear—or, more accurately, wherever U.S. officials imagine they appear.

Our military and media operations have advanced the ultimate goal of our grand strategy—restoring Islamic rule to the Muslim world. We have a winning formula:

- Driving the United States from the Middle East;
- Destroying Israel and the region's Arab tyrannies; and
- Settling scores with the heretical Shiites.

Frankly, brothers, things had to get much worse for Muslims before they could get better. We had to goad America into sending a larger, more vulnerable presence into the Muslim world before we could bleed its forces and treasury. The mujaheddin's 9/11 raid did just that; the inexplicable U.S. decision to invade Iraq vastly expanded the American presence. (Only God could grant such a miracle!) Al-Qaida and the groups we have inspired are now exploiting both the triumph of 9/11 and the hornet's nest in Iraq that the Americans so foolishly kicked over.

When the Americans occupied Afghanistan after 9/11, we were confident that we could defeat them there, which would start their retreat from the region. When the Americans madly invaded Iraq, we grew more confident, perhaps cocky. Brothers, we lacked humility for these gifts from God, and now we are on the edge of a setback—one that could disrupt our grand strategy.

But to win this war, our strategy's three parts must be pursued in order: First, drive America from Arab lands, then finish off Israel, Mubarak and the House of Saud, then deal with the Shiite apostates. But we risk defeat if we (ital) simultaneously (end ital) fight the Americans, the Zionists, the corrupted Arab regimes and the Shiites.

When the Americans occupied Afghanistan after 9/11, we were confident that we could defeat them there, which would start their retreat from the region. When the Americans madly invaded Iraq, we grew more confident, perhaps cocky. Brothers, we lacked humility for these gifts from God, and now we are on the edge of a setback—one that could disrupt our grand strategy.

Military success came too fast in Iraq. The Iraqi mujaheddin are not ready to unite in an Islamist government to replace the U.S. agent, Nouri al-Maliki. Part of this failure is al-Qaida's fault. We allowed the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, may God accept him as a martyr, to remain al-Qaida's commander in Iraq for too long. He was consumed by hatred for Iraq's Shiites and struck them murderously, angering Shiite and Sunni alike. His excesses helped create what, for now, is an unbridgeable split between the two sects, and he raised the specter of civil war in Iraq. Such a conflict would hurt our ability to keep the world's Muslims focused on the Crusaders and Zionists and allow the apostate Arab regimes to pose as Islam's protectors by supplying guns, money and fighters to Iraq's Sunnis in their battle with the Shiites.

Al-Qaida and its allies in Iraq are laboring to repair the damage left by our martyred Abu Musab, and have had some success. But Saudi preachers and spies are deepening the hatred for Shiites among Iraq's Sunni insurgents faster than we can heal the wounds. As in post-Soviet Afghanistan, the perfidious House of Saud is stealing the fruit of Islam's military victory by preventing the emergence of a united Sunni front through bribery, false religious guidance and efforts to stoke intra-Sunni fighting.

We must face this reality, brothers, and be ready to retake the initiative in 2008. While U.S. forces are in Iraq, the mujaheddin will focus on them, but after they retreat—and a new U.S. president could leave quickly—the chance of civil war increases. If such a conflict erupts, the mujaheddin might focus on Iraq, not America.

For this reason, I urge you to consider two military options for al-Qaida to have in hand if needed:

- An attack on a major oil-production plant in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques, which suffers under the rule of the House of Saud, to greatly disrupt the world's oil supply and compel U.S. forces to rush into the kingdom to protect the undamaged facilities and rebuild the others; or
- A raid greater than 9/11 in the United States, an option that could do graver and graver damage as the U.S. economy deteriorates.

Brothers, we can execute either operation. Each would make Washington overreact, again unleashing the Americans' military ferocity. Such a response would have only a minor impact on the dispersed forces of al-Qaida and our allies in jihad, but America's vengeance would kill many, many innocent Muslims—and, perhaps, with the approval of the despised House of Saud, find the Americans again desecrating the holy soil of Arabia near Mecca and Medina. These results would focus the wrath of the world's Muslims on America, delay a Shiite-Sunni civil war in Iraq and keep our grand strategy viable.

Brothers, think about these ideas, and join me in praying for God's guidance.

Tourist trap

By ERIC LUCAS
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

"You guys are from the States, yes?"

Our interlocutor, speaking in the crisp cadences of the British Caribbean, was a woman in her mid-50s with a food stall along the Rainbow Highway in Belize. "We're from Seattle," I acknowledged. "Have you been?"

She sighed.

"My daughter lives in L.A. I've been trying to go visit her—I'd love to see Disneyland—but my visa application has been rejected twice. It costs $100 to apply, and that's about as much as I make here in a week. One has to go to the embassy in person, and that takes up a whole day. I can't afford to try again. They keep your money whether you're accepted or not."

Travel is booming worldwide—except in the United States. And that woman's experience represents just one reason why.

Overseas arrivals to the U.S. have declined 11 percent this decade, to 23 million in 2007 from 26 million in 2000. Travel is the world's largest industry, currently worth $5 trillion, and it is growing 6 percent a year. It employs almost a quarter of a billion people. And yet the U.S. is missing out on this wonderful human commerce.

Californians have a keen understanding of this. Travel spending in the Golden State is about $90 billion a year. With the U.S. dollar as soft as confetti, you would think droves of overseas visitors would be arriving to spend their pounds, euros and other currencies. Yet foreign arrivals are still down from their peak in 2000 at Los Angeles International Airport, the West's top gateway for international travelers.

Why? American arrogance. The United States is a crass, greedy and rude host.

To start, we treat foreigners as criminals until proven otherwise.

These are the 29 countries whose citizens may visit the U.S. without a visa: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Britain. It's a near lily-white list. The rest of the world's people—all 5 multicolored billion of them—are suspect. And overseas, they know the U.S. thinks that.

Canada, by comparison, accepts nonvisa visits from citizens of more than 50 countries. The European Union exempts all EU-member nations, plus another 43 countries, including South Korea, Brazil, Chile and Mexico. So it's easier for a Mexican citizen to visit Europe than the United States.

We're no more helpful once a visitor arrives. I thought about this recently when reading a freeway sign. It said, concisely, "O'Hare next left." I read English, so I was able to get to the airport and fly home. But suppose you speak, oh, Cantonese?

There's an international symbol—an outline of an airplane—used on direction signs all over Europe, Asia and in Mexico. Not here. "Costs too much to add signs for all them furaners." That's what a highway official once told me when I asked about fixing this.

Signs aren't the only issue. Tourism Vancouver, which promotes visits to that Canadian city, posts its Web site in six languages. At Vancouver's Metropolitan Hotel, staff members muster 20 languages among them.

The Los Angeles visitors bureau has four foreign languages on its Web site—Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Japanese—which is a darn sight better than Seattle, my hometown (one, Spanish) and San Francisco (none). Disneyland? Spanish. San Diego? Zip. The U.S. State Department? Zero. Discoveramerica.com, the travel industry's Web site promoting U.S. travel, appears to offer four foreign languages but, er, um, no content. Check back in March.

For those still determined to visit the U.S., the visa process involves going in person to a U.S. Embassy or consulate for an interview. And as the woman in Belize learned, there are no refunds if your visa application is rejected. Why are people turned away? Scruffiness, unsuitability, past contributions to Greenpeace or general ickiness. Read the State Department guidelines—visitors must satisfy consular officers that they deserve to enter. But consular officials do not have to explain reasons for rejection, and they don't.

A colleague of mine has a business in Brazil, and one of his investors conceived the idea of taking his family to Walt Disney World. This wealthy businessman, who could buy a whole hotel in the U.S., never mind hotel rooms, flew to Sao Paulo, paid $500 ($100 a person) to apply for a visa and patiently spent an hour answering questions. Two weeks later he was turned down. The letter suggested that he reapply ($500 more, please!) but, surprise, he took his family to Europe. Brazilians don't need visas to enter the EU.

The nonrefundable U.S. visa application fee recently went up to $131. Luckily for many visitor wannabes, their currencies are climbing while the dollar is shredding. Unluckily for us, we're too busy protecting the homeland from supposedly scurrilous foreigners to let them in. Until we change our official and unofficial attitudes toward the world, 5 billion people will pass us by. We're missing out on a lot more than just money—but we're missing out on a lot of that too.

Lucas is a Seattle-based travel and business writer.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲83° ▼74°	▲82° ▼74°	▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°

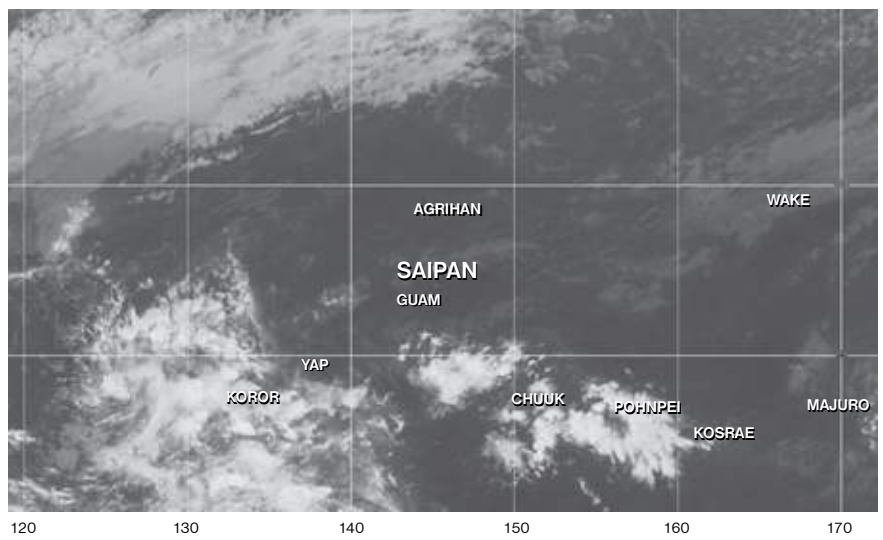
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲83	▼76
Palau	Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼72
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲76	▼66
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲43	▼24
Hong Kong	Rain	▲67	▼65
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲80	▼67
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲55	▼46
Los Angeles	Rain	▲60	▼50
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲82	▼76
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲63	▼46
Miami	Cloudy	▲84	▼60
New York	Partly Sunny	▲40	▼28
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲38	▼26
Paris	Partly Sunny	▲56	▼44
Pusan	Sunny	▲66	▼45
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼42
Salem	Showers	▲52	▼37
San Francisco	Rain	▲59	▼44
Seoul	Sunny	▲39	▼17
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲45	▼39
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲44	▼29

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SATURDAY, FEB. 23, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front stretches southwestward from 25N178E to 19N170E, then continues as a shear line to south of Wake Island at 18N167E to just north of rota near 14N145E to end near 10N130E. Extensive cloudiness and widespread rain are found along and up to 350 miles north of this boundary between 17N161E and 25N178E. Patchy clouds and scattered showers are found along and up to 200 miles of the rest of the shear line south of 17N161E. A secondary shear line branches southwestward from 17N161E to end north of Chuuk at 10N150E. Patchy clouds and scattered showers are seen along and up to 150 miles northwest of this shear line. A surface trough extends northward from a weak circulation centered near EQ135E to 13N130E. Low-level convergence associated with the trough is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over the Republic of Palau or south of a line from 10N134E to 8N140E to 4N144E to EQ144E. Another low-level trough is located between Chuuk and Pohnpei and runs northward from EQ153E to 7N153E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms associated with the trough are occurring from south of Guam across Chuuk and Pohnpei to west of Kosrae. This area is bounded by 12N144E to 9N158E to 2N162E to 3N151E to 10N142E and back to 12N144E. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers from the Marshall Islands to the dateline. This area includes Kwajalein within 60 miles of a line from 8N167E to 11N178E, and Majuro within 100 miles of a line from 4N166E to 3N170E to 7N173E to 7N176E to 3N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
3:41AM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
9:45AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
4:16PM Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet
9:56PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38AM	6:23PM
Monday	6:37AM	6:24PM
Tuesday	6:37AM	6:24PM
Wednesday	6:36AM	6:24PM
Thursday	6:35AM	6:24PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:59PM	8:55AM*
Monday	9:47PM	9:32AM*
Tuesday	10:37PM	10:11AM*
Wednesday	11:28PM	10:54AM*
Thursday	11:28PM**	10:54AM

*Following Day **Preceding Day

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  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
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- SAMU'T SARI
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- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 078	8:25am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:25am	11:05am	Daily
Saipan-Manila			
CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3
Saipan-Seoul			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Guanzhou			
CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6
Saipan-Shanghai			
MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6
Guam-Manila			
CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7
Guam-Hongkong			
CO 909	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya
Osaka-Saipan			
NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Manila-Saipan			
CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3
Seoul-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7
Guanzhou-Saipan			
CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5
Shanghai-Saipan			
MU 589	8:05pm	3:00am+1	1,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Hongkong-Guam			
CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5
Rota-Guam			
CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM Family Worship
3:00 PM Choir Rehearsal
Wednesdays at Parsonage
7:00 PM Prayer, Share and Care

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service
(Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am– 12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

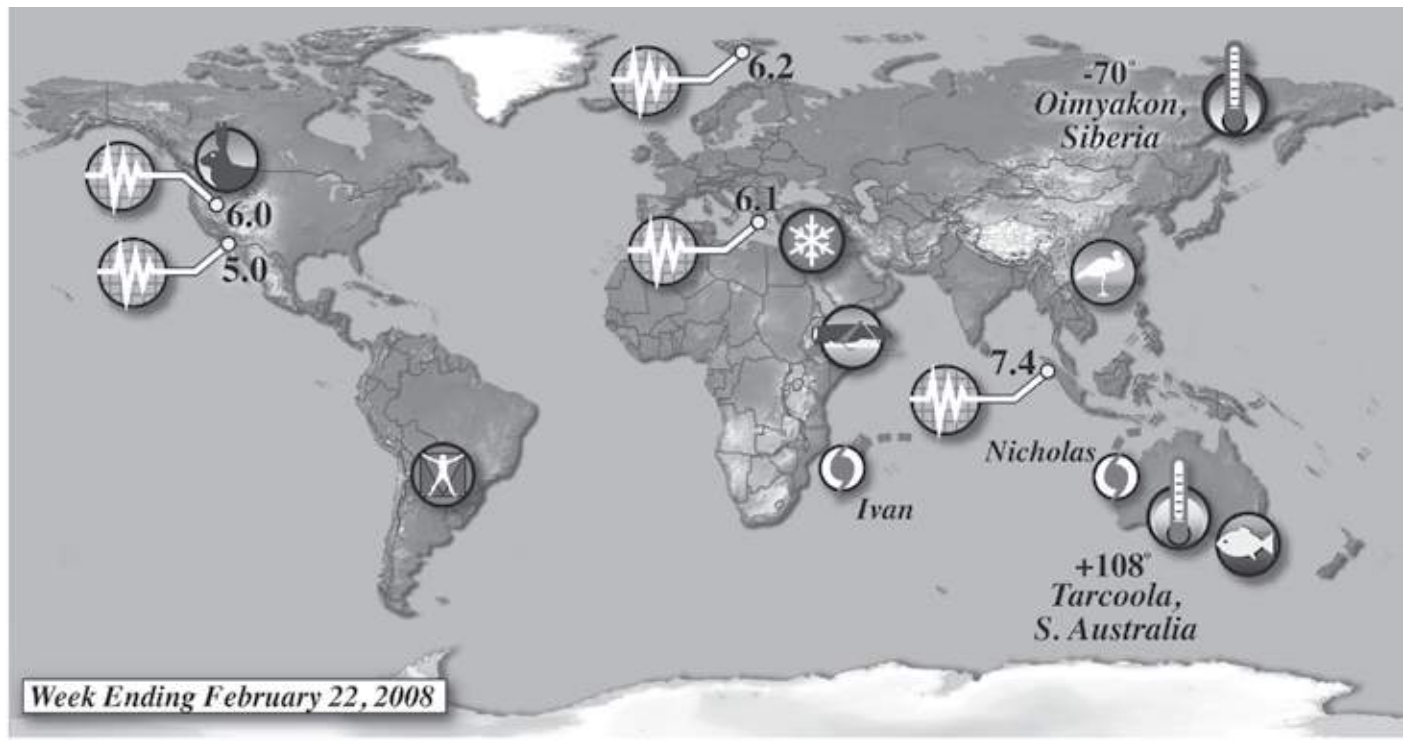
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



Missing Migrants

The coldest Chinese winter in decades, which has caused widespread misery to the human population since mid-January, also appears to be responsible for the disappearance of more than 100,000 migratory birds in the east of the country, according to state media. Luo Shengjin, deputy director of the Poyang Lake Nature Reserve in the eastern Jiangxi province, told Xinhua that about 200,000 wild birds had been there before the snow and freezing temperatures arrived last month, but officials had found only 40,000 since the weather began to ease last week. Luo said no mass deaths had been uncovered and the birds could have migrated elsewhere.

Locust Threat

A gathering swarm of desert locusts threatens to devour crops from the Saudi Peninsula and Horn of Africa southward to Kenya in the coming months, according to an advisory from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Immature locust swarms were reported east of the Rift Valley in Ethiopia and the southern Somali region. Experts warned that the insects could reach maturity and lay eggs before the March rainy season.

Tropical Cyclones

High winds and flash flooding from Cyclone Ivan pummeled the island of Madagascar, killing at least 11 people and leaving hundreds of others homeless. Catastrophic damage occurred on the tourist island of Sainte Marie.

■ Cyclone Nicholas brought beneficial rainfall to the northwestern tip of Australia without inflicting significant wind damage.

Vanishing Act

A new study by the Wildlife Conservation Society has found that jack rabbits living in and around Yellowstone National Park have apparently hopped into oblivion over the past few decades. Writing in the journal Oryx, lead author Joel Berger says that historical records show that while the white-tailed jack rabbits were abundant 130 years ago around Yellowstone and Grand Teton, no sightings have been confirmed in Yellowstone since 1991. Only three have been seen in Grand Teton since 1978. "It could be disease, extreme weather, predation or other factors," Dr. Berger wrote. He proposes reintroducing the species to restore the ecological processes that existed before the rabbits vanished.

Middle East Snow

A brutal winter storm brought heavy snow and blizzard conditions to much of the eastern Mediterranean, disrupting transportation from Greece to Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. The storm forced schools and businesses to shut down from Athens to Jerusalem. In Lebanon, heavy wet snow brought down power lines, leaving many villages and towns in darkness. The Beirut-Damascus mountain highway linking Lebanon with Syria and the rest of the Arab world was blocked by snow drifts.

Earthquakes

A powerful 7.4 magnitude temblor centered off quake-prone western Sumatra killed three people and seriously injured 25 others.

■ A 6.0 magnitude quake wrecked buildings and ruptured water and gas lines in northeastern Nevada. Shaking was also felt in Salt Lake City.

■ Earth movements were also felt in southern Greece, Arctic Norway's Svalbard archipelago and along the California-Mexico border.

Yellow Fever Outbreak

Seven cases of yellow fever have been confirmed in Paraguay in what the World Health Organization (WHO) says is the country's first outbreak in 34 years. The seven infections occurred in the San Pedro region, while four more suspected cases were discovered in the town of Lorenzo, near Paraguay's capital of Asuncion. Paraguayan Health Minister Oscar Martinez has requested urgent shipments of vaccine from neighboring countries, and from the WHO's International Coordinating Group on Vaccine Provision.

Fish Memory

An Australian teenager has busted the myth that goldfish have only a three-second memory, proving that they have mental capacities to learn and remember complex concepts and retain knowledge for at least six days. Fifteen-year-old Rory Stokes, from the Australian Science and Mathematics School in Adelaide, taught a small group of fish to swim to a beacon by establishing a memory connection between the beacon and food. After the initial three-week period, the beacon was removed from the feeding process. Six days later, the beacon was again placed in the water and it was noted the fish quickly swam to the beacon despite not seeing it for almost a week, showing they had remembered the association between food and the beacon. Stokes told reporters his findings prove it is cruel to keep fish in small tanks.

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OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Uh, uh. Where did I get this jacket?

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. (AP)—He must have really liked the jacket. An 18-year-old man has been charged with stealing clothing from a department store after police said he showed up for questioning wearing a jacket taken months earlier. Felipe M. Medina, of Sheboygan, was charged Thursday with a misdemeanor count of retail theft. The criminal complaint said Medina took a pair of blue jeans, a black T-shirt and a black jacket from a Kohl's store on Nov. 27 in Sheboygan. Police Capt. James Veeser identified Medina as the suspect after viewing the store surveillance tape. A detective asked Medina to come to the police station Wednesday. He admitted in a police interview that he took the clothes and was currently wearing the stolen jacket, the complaint said.

'Stolen truck' taken by dog in Calif.

AZUSA, Calif. (AP)—Doggone it, my truck's gone! Police said Charles McCowan parked his pickup in front of a mini-mart Wednesday, leaving his 80-pound Boxer named Max in the passenger seat. When he came out, the truck and Max were gone. McCowan called police, assuming the truck had been stolen. When officers arrived, they found the pickup across the street in a fast-food parking lot but had no idea how it got there. In security video shown Thursday on KCAL-TV, the truck can be seen rolling backward out of the store lot and across the street, threading its way through traffic and out of view. Police said that after McCowan left the truck, Max knocked the vehicle out of gear and sent it rolling backward. Both Max and the truck emerged without a scratch.

Does it come in pink or blue?

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)—Sweden, a champion of gender equality, plans to introduce unisex underwear for hospital patients in a move designed to save both money and space, the project leader said Thursday. The Swedish Standards Institute has developed a new style of boxer-style underwear that is considered equally suitable for male and female patients. Swedish hospitals currently have four different models of underwear: two for men and two for women. Switching to one model will save money because hospitals can buy greater quantities at a better price, project leader Tuula Cammersand said.

Good Housekeeping

Leftovers get new life as decorative stone

By GARY DYMSKI
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

BAY SHORE, N.Y.—In one area of their landscape recycling yard were pile upon pile of mulch, much of it being dyed black, red and brown. In another area were piles of crushed concrete and asphalt. Much of it was, well, doing nothing but piling up.

"We saw this demand for landscape mulch," says Billy Zorn, who, with his brother, Michael, runs Hubbard Sand & Gravel, a landscape and mason supply, and North East Recycling. "We were dyeing it and seeing it go out of the yard almost as fast as we could get it ready.

"And we kept thinking, `What can we do with the crushed aggregate, the concrete? Is there something we can do to make it popular as a ground cover, like mulch?' "

After nearly five years of research and development, the Zorn brothers finally have their answer. It's Zorock decorative stone, a color-rich, man-made landscape cover that's making noise in warm-weather climates such as Florida and a few other Southern states.

The Zorn brothers say they believe Zorock, made from recycled material, can replace mulch in many landscape applications. For one, Michael Zorn says, it's nontoxic. Also, it's taking a waste material and making it a colorful, long-lasting product. "Children or pets could get a rock in their mouths, and the coloring won't harm them," he says. "And unlike mulch, which has to be replaced every few years or even sooner, Zorock lasts and lasts."

And with Zorock, unlike some mulch, there is no threat of insects, such as termites.

Zorock starts out as chunks of concrete and asphalt ripped up from roads, driveways and parking lots. It goes through an extensive process in an automated system—washing, shaping and coloring—before it is packed into 50-pound bags. The brothers invested about $1 million in automation to produce the stone, including designing their own coloring machine. Zorock prices range from $5.50 to $9 per bag, depending on the distributor.

NEWSDAY

This villa on Shinnecock Bay is an example of the use of Zorock decorative stone, a color-rich, man-made landscape cover that relies on recycled crushed concrete and asphalt.

Recycled aggregate has but a few uses. Primarily, it's used as a base for concrete and asphalt paving and the installation of paving stones and other bricks. Some larger paving companies grind up old driveways on the job site and redistribute it as base. It's an extremely efficient way to pave. But only larger companies have such grinding machines; smaller companies must dump old concrete and asphalt. And if it's not reused for base, often it heads for landfills.

So, Billy Zorn asks, what could be better than turning it into a landscape stone? Here's a recycled product with environmentally friendly—let's call it green—features.

Spreading Zorock, which comes in six colors, can be a do-it-yourself project or can be done professionally by landscape contractors. Either way, it's relatively easy to get, easy to install. A porous landscape fabric is rolled out to cover the planting bed, walkway or design area, and the rock is spread on top, usually to a depth of 2 inches. There is some maintenance; a sealer should be applied twice each year (from a pump sprayer) to maintain the product's color.

Michael Zorn says the cost of the sealer—$20 a gallon, which covers 200 square feet—is comparable to replacing colored mulch every spring or so.

So far, Zorock has been a commercial hit. Michael Zorn has been busy making forms for clients, so company emblems can be displayed as "lawn plaques."

"The next step is getting it in the hands of homeowners," Billy Zorn says.

In some respects, Zorock might appear a bit gaudy, with colors such as Purple Paradise, Pacific Blue and Caribbean Green. But the Zorns think a little Zorock can go a long way. "In residential applications, we're seeing homeowners covering small planting beds or circular beds for single trees," Michael Zorn says. "We think the rock will be used with natural stone and other landscape materials to add color around pools, sheds and other areas."

Certainly the California Gold and Desert Rose colors are earthy and more closely resemble natural stone.

Michael Zorn says another feature of the product is its size; it comes in a heavier three-quarter-inch aggregate. And this larger size addresses a major concern. Because of harsh Northeast weather and falling leaves, planting beds need plenty of maintenance in late fall and early spring. Won't blowing and raking leaves and debris from the beds disturb the colorful stone?

"The larger size means it can stand up to leaf blowers and yard vacuums," Billy Zorn says. "It's just the right size for a bed that has to be cleared of leaves."

Using recycled products as mulch concerns some

By GARY DYMSKI
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

Using recycled products as mulch, ground cover and even a base in all-weather athletic fields is a concern for many environmental groups.

According to research, one such recycled product, culled from ground-up rubber tires, might be carcinogenic. Crumbled rubber mulch is being marketed as soft ground cover for use in playgrounds and near playground structures, such as swings, slides and climbing bars. Another similar product is being used as a base material for artificial grass surfaces.

On one end, most of the research—and concerned groups are quick to point this out—is inconclusive. But these groups also point to the levels of zinc, cadmium and other heavy metals in "tire crumbs." The material has been found to emit volatile organic compounds (known as VOCs) into the air. Some studies suggest that tire crumbs can be harmful to plants.

So what's a homeowner to do? Before you buy tire crumbs for ground cover in a yard or play area, it might be wise to wait until all the studies are in. For the next few years or so, rely on good, old-fashioned wood mulch.

Answers to home questions

By GARY DYMSKI
(C) 2008, NEWSDAY

Question: I have a small concrete patio in my back yard. The yard also features a lot of old trees, with very long and thick roots. The root system is lifting up my patio, so I have to replace it. I'd like to use another type of material, but I'm afraid I will have the same problems. Any suggestions so I can have a patio where I can still entertain?

Answer: I'm a huge proponent of paving stone patios, so I suggest you consider a design that could feature a raised section. You might use a professional landscaper to add soil to the existing yard, then design the patio so the root system is well below the surface of the new patio. A multilevel patio, with some steps and raised areas, might be just the thing to protect the roots and the integrity of the patio.

On the other hand, installing a patio over the root system could be a problem in the long run. Who's to say the roots won't push up the paving stones over time? Usually, a paving-stone patio is placed on a bed of crushed gravel covered by a thin layer of sand or crushed bluestone. Some installers use a 4-inch bed of concrete on which to lay the stones. Either way, I suspect that even the paving-stone patio could be lifted or moved by the expansive root system.

Another option—and I think this might be the best solution—is designing a multilevel deck made from one of the many composite wood products. Trex, TimberTech, EverGrain and Weatherbest are among the more popular composite lumber products, and most of them feature accessories, like railing systems. Composite lumber, made from recycled plastic and real wood fibers, resists rot, decay and insects, and it comes in several wood-like colors, complete with the feel and look of wood grain. And, best of all, it is a low-maintenance product. You never need to paint or stain your deck.

A raised deck made from composite lumber, designed around the root system, should give you years of service.

Q.: Do you recommend sealing the grout or ceramic tile that we're having put in our basement utility room, which has a washer, dryer, sink and furnace?

A.: Sealing the grout depends on the joint. Generally, sanded grout, which contains sand for added strength, is used on joints wider than 1/16 inch, like for larger floor tiles. Non-sanded grout is used on thinner joints, like for tiles used for walls and countertops.

A lot of contractors use a grout that contains a polymer or mix the grout with a liquid latex additive. These additives improve the grout's flexibility, which prevents cracking and separating, and it also is said to boost stain resistance.

Since this is a utility room and in the basement, I suspect it will be an area that attracts some dirt and debris, especially with your furnace in the room. So, if you have wide joints, use a sponge-type paint brush to apply any number of commercial grout sealers. Simply dip the edge of the sponge brush into the sealer, then carefully dab it into the joint. Most grout sealers should not be applied to the tile itself, so work slowly.

On thinner joints, I don't think sealing is going to make a difference. It's such a small joint, that any dirt or debris that is trapped should be easy enough to clean.

As for sealing the tile itself, the rule of thumb is that a glazed tile—one with any type of shiny surface—does not need sealing. If you have an unglazed tile, then refer to the manufacturer's recommendations. Many unglazed tiles need not be sealed, so lean on the advice of the manufacturer. To be sure, test the tile with a little water. If water dropped onto the surface of the tile is absorbed, it's a good sign the tile needs to be sealed. Just a tip: I would not use an unglazed tile in a high-traffic area like a utility room. Pick a tile that is glazed but not overly shiny; less sheen usually translates to better traction and reduces the chances of slipping if the tile gets wet.

Cleaner logs are no substitute

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
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Q. My wife and I recently moved into a house with a nice fireplace, and we love to have a fire going almost every night. I want to make sure the chimney does not get too filled with creosote, however, so about once a month I burn a "cleaner log" that says it cleans the creosote from chimneys. A friend told me these logs are useless. What's your take?—Jamie T., Hartford, Conn.

A. While the cleaner log industry might argue with me, I'm inclined to side with your friend on this one. Burning matter—wood, paper and so on—creates ash, soot and other byproducts. Much of this floats up and out of the chimney, but some of it—especially heavier particles—drifts to the side and down and adheres to the inside of the chimney. It doesn't matter how "clean" an item burns—it still produces ash, soot, pitch and other residues. A "cleaner log" produces less of these items, but you're still burning something in your fireplace.

A better way to maintain your fireplace for the long run—and ensure nice, bright and warm fires for many years to come—is to avoid burning items that contribute more creosote deposits than others. These include trash, food items, glossy magazines, "cheap" wood like many pine logs, and green wood (fresh-cut wood that hasn't had time to season properly).

Once a year, in the late spring or summer, have a professional chimney cleaner inspect, clean and make any needed repairs to your chimney. He or she will check the system thoroughly—including a look up on the roof at the stack—and will scrub away creosote deposits. That's the only sure way to have a clean fireplace system.

HOME TIP: Hardwoods like oak and birch that have been well-seasoned (allowed to cure outdoors for several months after cutting) are among the cleanest-burning materials for your fireplace.

Send questions or home-repair tips to homeguru2000@hotmail.com, or write This Is a Hammer, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

New designs from old inspirations

By JANET EASTMAN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

FRANKFURT, Germany—Lladro, Waterford, Villeroy & Boch are venerable companies whose names evoke images of fussy figurines, classic crystal and traditional china.

So then what's this? A teacup with a horse-leg handle? A goblet with Indian etchings? A soup bowl shaped like some modernist sculpture? Convention-defying surprises set the mood at Ambiente, the tabletop-heavy design show that ended last week at the Frankfurt Fair and Exhibition Centre. If the home furnishings exhibitions in Paris and Milan, Italy, are known for showcasing the world's top designers in glamorous style, Ambiente is defined by its size: 4,600 exhibitors and 145,000 attendees, making it the world's largest consumer goods show. Whereas the crowds in Paris and Milan look to be inspired, the crowds in Frankfurt look to buy, sourcing the designs that soon will land in stores—and homes.

The newsmakers this year: old purveyors of tabletop finery looking for ways to stay young. These companies have hired top designers to dig deep into the archives and build contemporary new designs around bits of the past.

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Royal Copenhagen introduced its first new tableware set of the 21st century with a chandelier of broken plates.

Royal Copenhagen, which was founded in 1775 to serve the queen of Denmark, introduced Elements, its first new tableware set of the 21st century. The chrysanthemums that have been immortalized on dainty saucers for centuries are sprinkled helter-skelter onto the edges of jugs, mugs and cheese boards. Danish designer Louise Campbell even called for a departure from the company's classic blue. In its place: tangerine, turquoise and midnight black.

"It's evolutionary, a reinvention within our cultural heritage," spokeswoman Fikriye Selen-Okatan said while standing underneath a chandelier made of the new line's broken plates. "It's more modern, more casual, younger."

Lladro of Spain, best known to many people for its cherub figurines, has been the most radical in recycling its archives. For its Re-Cyclos series, designer Bodo Sperlein hunted around the factory and found a horse figurine to use as the basis for his new Ascot collection. A leg and hoof formed the handle for a teapot, cup and sugar bowl; he linked two together to form a napkin ring, and three horse heads served as the base of a large pedestal bowl.

The 127-year-old company Rosenthal brought designer Patricia Urquiola onboard to tone down the florals and spotlight the luminescence of high-quality porcelain. With Landscape, she applied lacelike handles, soft patterns and graceful irregular borders to a pure white surface.

Villeroy & Boch, which started in Germany in 1748, introduced a modern country style of tableware called Urban Nature. Plates and cups took unconventional, rectangular shapes, and the bowls looked like arching bridges. The line will be sold open stock, so it can be mixed and matched, a style promoted by many manufacturers to attract free-thinkers who don't want to dress a table as their mothers did.

Waterford hired Michael Aram to create Garland Romance, a line of etched crystal vases, flared bowls, flutes and wine glasses. The silhouettes and design were not a big departure for the crystal company, but Aram, who has lived in India for 20 years, also introduced a line called Jaipur, inspired by screen carvings and the architectural detailing that shapes India's ancient skylines. An ice bucket and votive holders were made of pierced nickel-plated brass, and shapely finials topped napkin rings, cocktail shakers and sugar bowls.

"It's all very exciting that these companies are inventing new designs, some based on their archives," said Nicolette Naumaun, vice president of show producer Messe Frankfurt. "They will reach out to a new generation that way."

There were, however, a few holdouts.

The Meissen Porcelain Manufactory of Germany, which claims to be the first factory to make china outside of China, didn't move far from its roots. At Ambiente, the company introduced an exact reproduction of a vase created in the mid-1700s with molded roses and fruits. Only 50 will be made and are priced around $25,000.

But buyers who attended the five-day annual show placed orders for workhorse items too: knives, trash cans, bathroom scales and waffle makers. Even the nitty-gritty stuff can shine: Berghoff of Belgium introduced three steel pots with strainer holes smartly built into the lids, which also could be used as trivets. (The pots, as with most of the items introduced at the show, won't be seen in the U.S. until spring.)

KITCHEN MAGIC

Corned Beef and Vegetables

COOK: 3 hours
TOTAL: 4 hours, 30 minutes
MAKES: 8 servings

1 (about 4 1/2 pounds) corned-beef brisket, trimmed of excess fat
20 whole black peppercorns
5 whole allspice
5 cloves garlic, unpeeled
2 bay leaves
4 pounds all-purpose potatoes, peeled and each cut into quarters
1 pound carrots, peeled
1 pound parsnips, peeled
1 medium (about 3 pounds) head green cabbage, cut into 8 wedges, with core attached
Chopped parsley for garnish

Horseradish-Mustard Sauce

1/2 cup(s) Dijon mustard, with seeds
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon prepared white horseradish

1. Prepare Corned Beef and Vegetables: In 8-quart Dutch oven or saucepot, place brisket, peppercorns, allspice, garlic, bay leaves and enough water to cover; heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 2 hours 30 minutes.

2. Add quartered potatoes, whole carrots and whole parsnips to Dutch oven; heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 30 minutes or until meat and vegetables are tender. With tongs and slotted spoon, transfer meat and vegetables to platter; cover and keep warm.

3. Add cabbage to liquid in Dutch oven; heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 5 minutes or until cabbage is tender.

4. Meanwhile, prepare Horseradish-Mustard Sauce: In small bowl, with fork, mix mustard, maple syrup and horseradish until smooth; set aside.

5. Drain cabbage and add to platter with meat. Thinly slice meat and serve with vegetables and mustard sauce. Garnish with chopped parsley.

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Keeping flowers alive

By ADRIAN HIGGINS
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

All cut flowers have a finite life span once harvested. When buying them, look for these signs of freshness:

- Leaves and petals that are upright and plump. Avoid wilted stems.
- Flower buds in color and blooms that are not fully opened.
- Clean, green leaves.
- Unbroken stems and petals that are neither battered nor bruised.
- An absence of slime where stalks have been sitting in water.

Once home, the flower must be quickly rehydrated by cutting at least an inch off each stem while they are submerged. This will remove the airlock in the stem's water column. Make an angled cut with clean scissors, bypass pruners (not anvil pruners, which can crush the stem) or a sharp knife. The cut flowers should be transferred immediately to a vase of fresh, warm water.

The key to long vase life is good sanitation: Use a clean, sterile vase and fresh water as well as the powdered preservative from the florist. This should be dissolved in warm water and then added to the vase. It will feed the plants and prevent bacteria from forming. If you don't have preserver, you can add a tablespoon of sugar and two or three drops of bleach per quart of water. Be careful: Excess sugar can cause leaf damage in such flowers as roses, lisianthus and proteas, said William Miller, a professor of horticulture at Cornell University.

Remove any leaves that are at the waterline or below, again to prevent bacteria from forming.

Eat all the contents of your fruit bowl, and don't smoke. This isn't a health tip. Apples, bananas and other fruit (including tomatoes) give off an odorless gas called ethylene that causes flowers to age prematurely. Ethylene is also found in cigarette smoke.

In addition, keep flowers away from drafts, heat sources and direct sunlight. Change the water every two or three days, making fresh stem cuts and adding more floral preserver. Take the opportunity to groom the bouquet by removing fading blooms.

With roses, avoid fully opened blooms, but also pass on stems with tight buds. Roses harvested too early will not last as long as those that have been cut later.

Remove the pollen-bearing anthers of lilies to avoid staining, but don't expect the step to prolong their vase life, Miller said.

The idea of putting a penny in a vase of tulips may have some value in that copper can act as a fungicide, but the other steps are far more important to giving cut flowers maximum vase life.

And remember, true love may last forever, but blooms do not. "It's okay for flowers to die," Miller said.

The Good Life

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Inmates practice Elizabethan steps with the help of London Shakespeare Workout Prison Project members at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, Calif.

The bard's the thing behind bars

By DIANE HAITHMAN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif.—Today's Elizabethan history lesson: learning the pavane, a 16th-century processional dance involving mincing steps and courtly bows, harpsichord accompaniment optional.

The men rehearsing the dance have the moves down, but look different from dancers in the court of Queen Elizabeth I. Maybe it's the heavy work boots and white T-shirts. Perhaps it's the muscular arms "tatted up," to use the performers' favored expression, and daintily extended as the two lines of partners join hands.

Or maybe it's those baggy blue pants, emblazoned with a word that just about guarantees nobody's going to pick up these guys if they were hitchhiking: "Prisoner."

The California Men's Colony, nestled in the rolling hills of San Luis Obispo, is nicknamed "Camp Snoopy" because its slant-roofed wooden dormitories resemble Snoopy's dog house—but life here is no cartoon.

Inmate Robert Flory, 41, says, "I've got one guy 2 1/2 feet to my right and another guy 2 1/2 feet to my left" in the prison housing, but he might as well be a million miles away from the 12-year-old son he rarely gets to see. Sometimes he'd like to forget that for a while. That's why Flory is doing Shakespeare.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Inmate Herbert Wells, left, and actor Cornelius Macarthy during rehearsal.

Flory, along with about 25 other inmates, is participating in the nonprofit London Shakespeare Workout Prison Project, a program established in 1997 that has produced Shakespeare by pairing professional actors with convicts and ex-convicts in prisons and theater venues throughout Britain, Europe and North America. Actors who have participated include Al Pacino, Richard Dreyfuss and Kenneth Branagh.

In cooperation with the California Men's Colony's Arts in Corrections program, Flory and his fellow incarcerated performers have spent 12 hours a day for two weeks rehearsing with Kelly Hunter, a long-standing member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Cornelius Macarthy and Lucinda Clare for "Rounding Shakespeare: In a Kingdom of One's Own," a musical celebration of the works of the Bard that also includes the words of Alfred Tennyson, Abraham Lincoln, Jean Anouilh and Edna St. Vincent Millay, plus sonnets and other writings by inmates and former inmates.

Some inmate actors say they were lured into the program by Deborah Tobola, a resident artist and writer who serves as a facilitator in Arts in Corrections. She offered them a choice: the Bard or "the yard," where participating prisoners say they have to do more acting than they do in the Shakespeare workshop just to survive the racial and social politics of prison life.

"We should get Academy Awards," says William Brown, 30.

This was Brown's first reaction to the idea of joining the cast of actors and musicians: "I'm from South-Central L.A.—Shakespeare, get on up outta here, Shakespeare?" he says, with a laugh.

Now, during frequent prison lockdowns, he and other cast members can be found in their bunks reading their scripts. Brown plans to continue performing when he leaves the prison.

"Even though we're behind these prison walls in here," he says of the rehearsal room, "we can be free."

The show, directed by Bruce Wall, executive director of LSW Prison Project and a co-founder of the program, was scheduled to have a three-night run before an inmate audience this week.

Wall fondly calls his prison performers "the lads." They're fond of him too—teasing the earnest and oh-so-proper gent wandering among them in a dapper suit and tie.

Visiting actor Clare—a standout in this crowd because she's female, not to mention her long, carrot-colored hair—recalls watching as "the lads" rehearsed a scene that required one of them to play a recently murdered corpse, lying on the floor, prompting inmate Flory to make the graphic observation: "He'd be twitching by now."

Wall then launched into a rather flustered explanation of why the "body" would indeed be twitching, the murder knife having been rather intrusive, the involuntary reaction of muscles and all that.

"How would you know?" demanded Flory, cracking up the onlookers.

For his part, Flory groans, then he chuckles when asked, well, how did he know?

"How do you answer a question like that for a paper that your parents read?" he scolds. "I worked as a bouncer; let's just say I've seen that type of thing before. Or ... let's say I saw it in a movie once."

In the rehearsal room in the prison's West Facility, which houses the minimum-security inmates, neither cast members nor the director asks questions like that. There's an unspoken rule: Don't ask others what they're in for or when they're getting out.

"We deal in futures," Wall says.

It's not a phony respect or false politeness, Flory insists; it's real.

"And we'll check each other: `You should know your lines by now. You can't disappear into the character unless you know your lines,'" he says.

When an inmate actor blows a line, the others chant: "Give me 25!" That is, 25 push-ups, a standard punishment for errant behavior in the yard.

But despite the don't-ask, don't-tell policy, the whole cast knows the story of 20-year-old Najee Bright, who is wrapping up the last five months of a 21-month term for assault, reduced from an original sentence of 75 years to life. Through the LSW Prison Project, Bright, a child actor before running afoul of the law, has been offered a full scholarship to study at Oxford University. He says he loves the riddles posed by Shakespeare's words.

"I'm going from a dorm in prison to a dorm at Oxford," Bright says. "All the cards were stacked against me. I hope that gives a lot of other people inspiration. The other guys in the yard can say: `This young brother got a scholarship to Oxford.'

"Now that I've got a foot in the door, I'm going to be one of the best actors in the world. And when I get up there to accept my Oscar, I can thank prison."

Nor will Bright waste his time on the podium thanking his agent and his hairdresser: "I pray for the person I hurt; I'm going to apologize to that person at the Oscars."

Fred Carraway Jr., 43, of central Los Angeles, used to be a member of the Rollin' 60s Crips gang; this isn't the first time he's been in prison, but he insists that because of his experiences with performance here it's going to be his last. He may not be headed for the Academy Awards, but he's headed somewhere.

"I'm too old for that," he says of his previous life on the streets. "I smile now that when I go out this time, I feel that I have something to work for."

And if that means dancing the pavane with another guy in the meantime, then so be it.

"We learned that in Shakespeare's time, actors were looked down on, like trailer trash, so no woman could go onstage and men played all the parts," he explains.

"You have to be willing to try anything, to get over what the homies might think," he adds. "Hey, if John Travolta's wearing a dress in a movie, we can do this."

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Inmate William Brown was at first dubious about Shakespeare's relevance, saying, "I'm from South-Central L.A.," but now he finds release in the program.

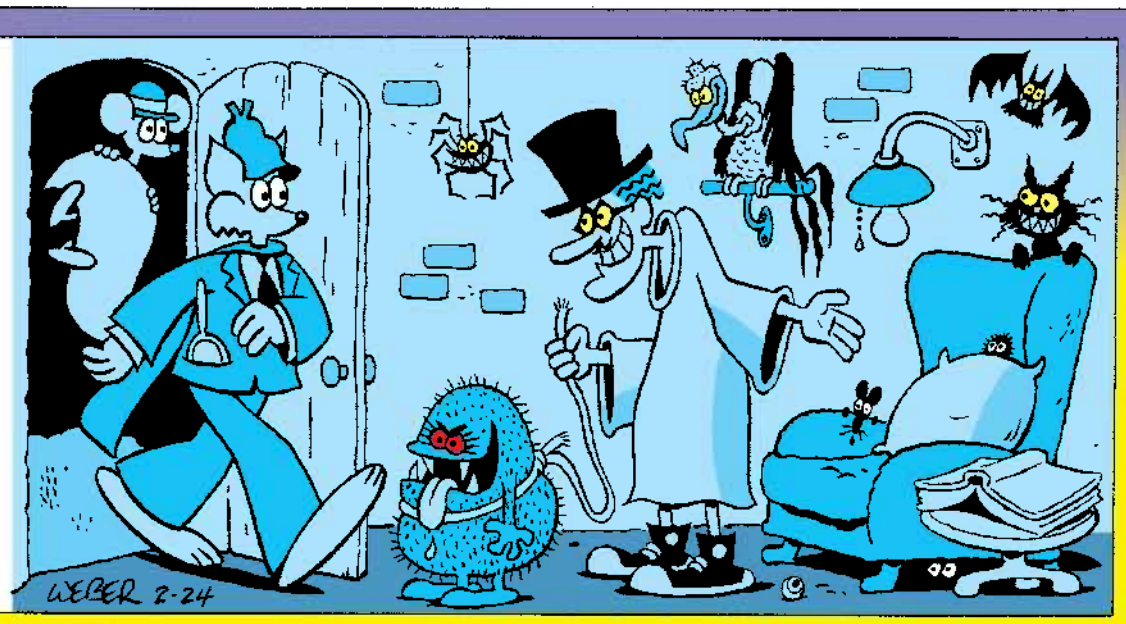
Bob Weber Jr.'s Slylock Fox and Comics for Kids

Which two moose are exactly alike?

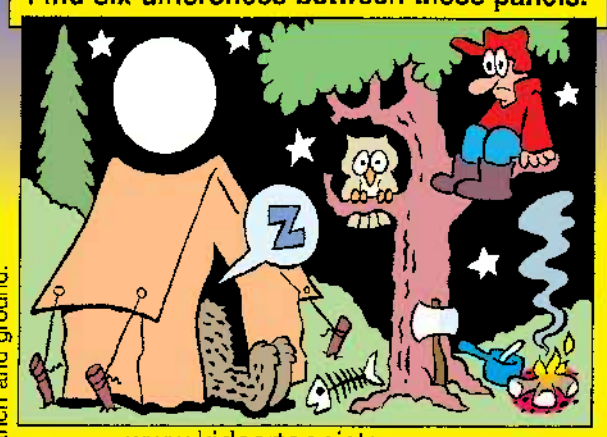
Answer -- Numbers one and four.

Slylock Fox received reports accusing Count Weirdly of terrorizing citizens with his creepy creature this evening. But Weirdly claims he's been home reading all night and insists he has just now stopped to walk his creature around the castle. What evidence did Slylock find that suggests Count Weirdly is lying?

Solution -- The reading light's bulb is cool. If Weirdly had just turned it off to go for a walk, it would still be warm.



Find six differences between these panels.



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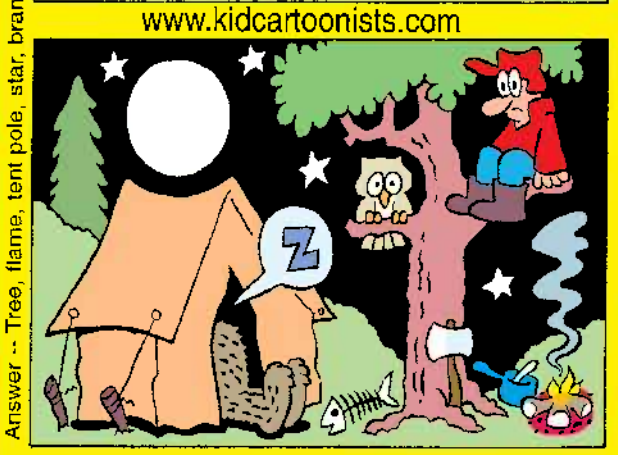
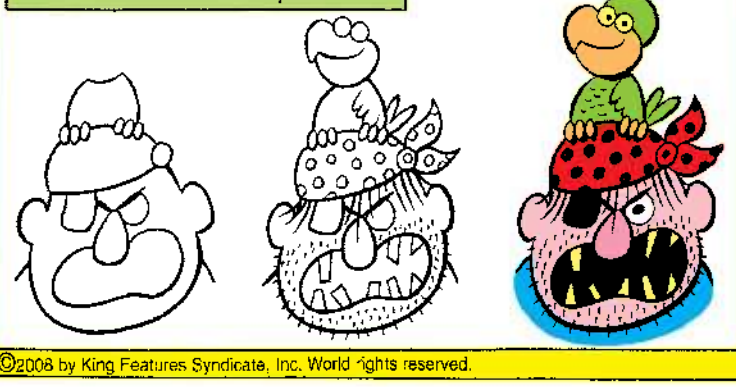


Answer -- Tree, flame, tent pole, star, branch and ground.

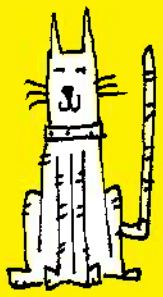
New! The fourth **Find the six differences** collection is here. Send $4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to **Six Differences No. 4**, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

HOW TO DRAW a pirate



YOUR DRAWING

Our featured artist is Amanda Preston, age 12, of Silver Spring, MD



Send your drawing to www.kidcartoonists.com

The scrambled words are forest animals. How many can you unscramble?

a) ABER
b) ETRLUT
c) REQSRLIU
d) ORCANOC

Answer -- a) Bear b) Turtle c) Squirrel d) Raccoon

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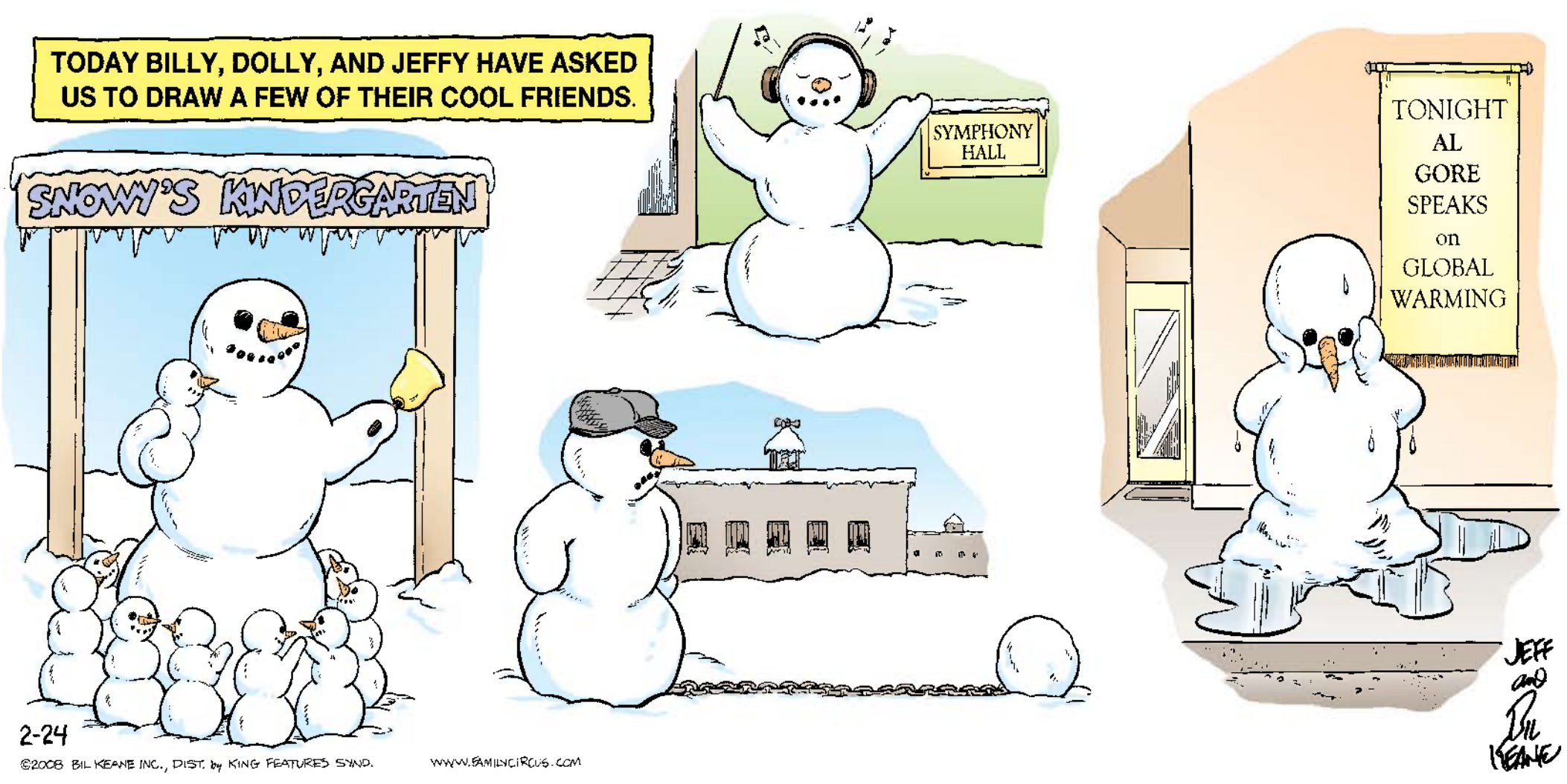
THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By Bil Keane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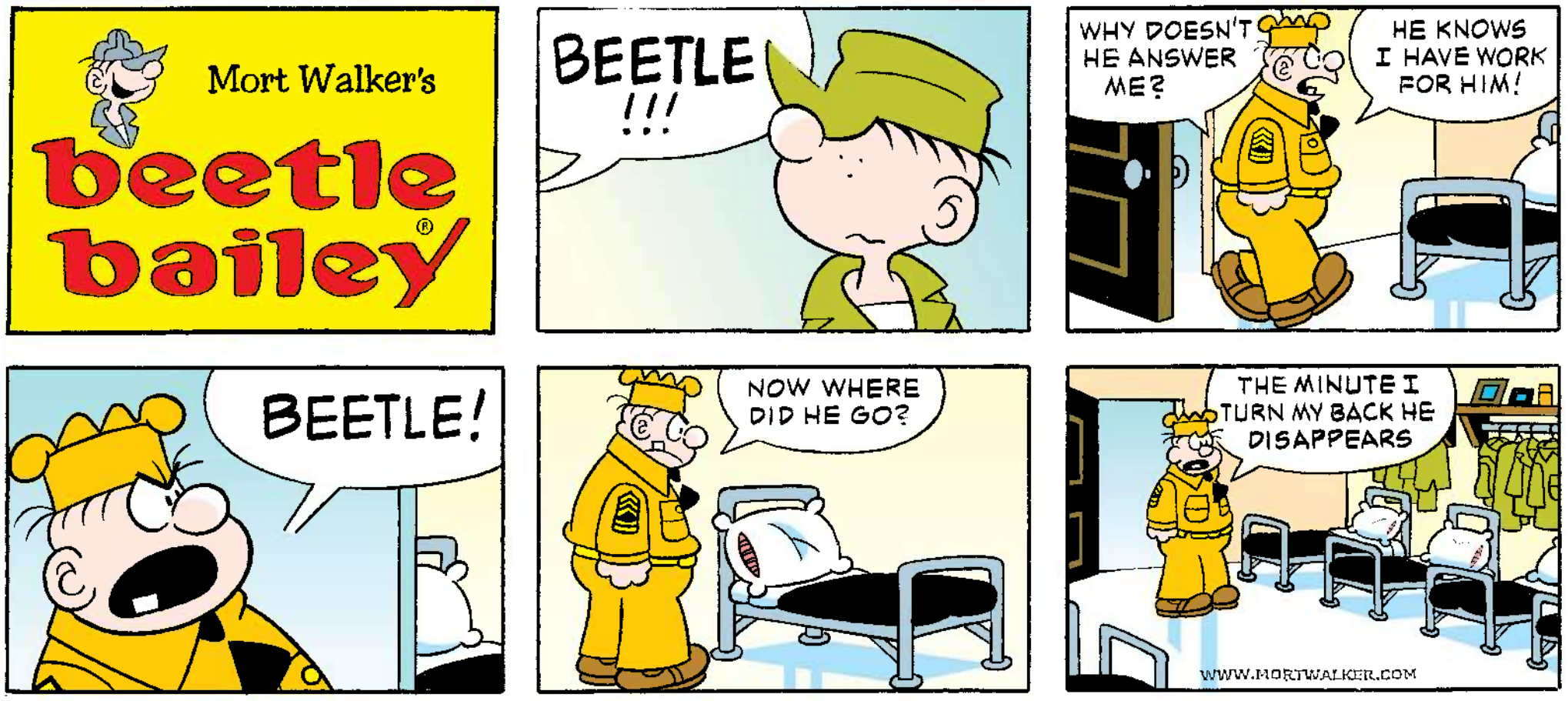
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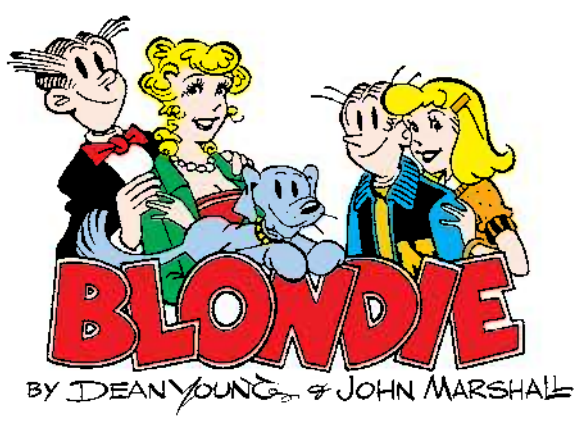
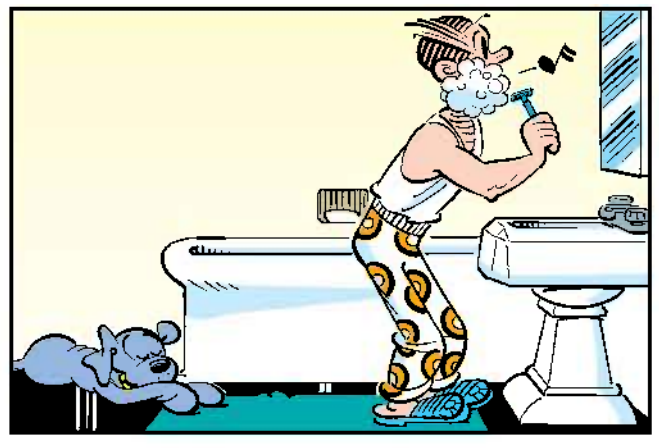

BLONDIE
BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL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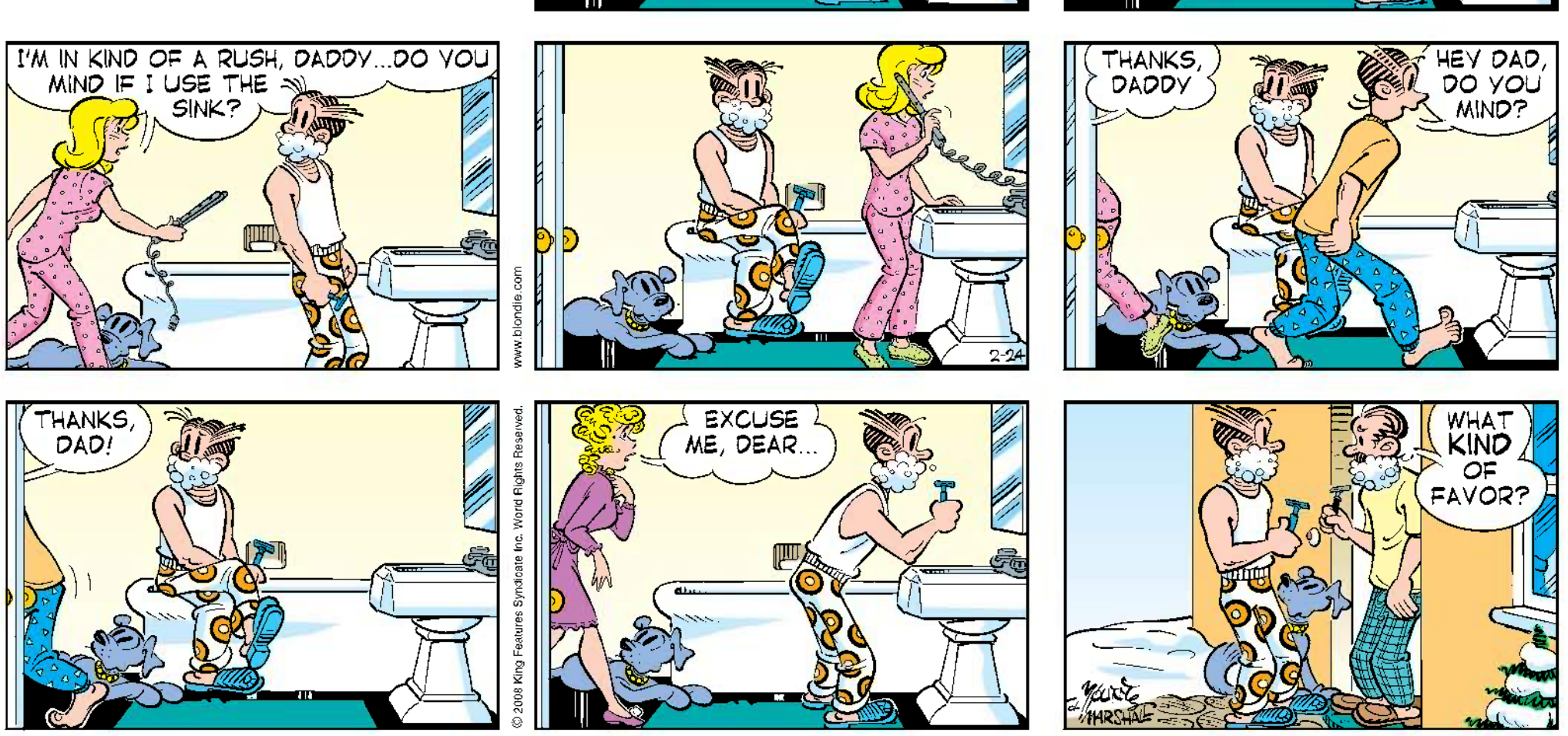
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HEY DAD, DO YOU MIND?
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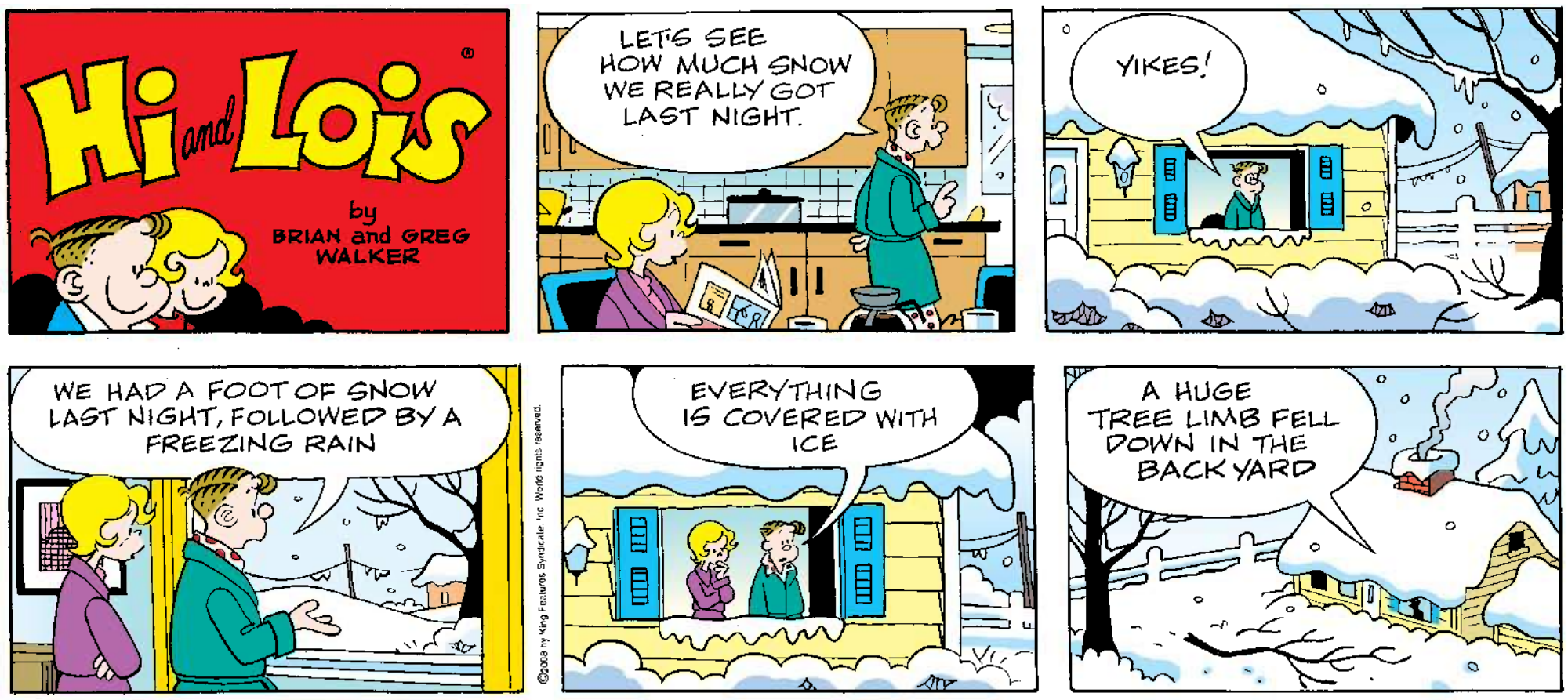
EXCUSE ME, DEAR...
WHAT KIND OF FAVOR?
YOUNG & MARSHALL


Hi and Lois
by BRIAN and GREG WALKER
LET'S SEE HOW MUCH SNOW WE REALLY GOT LAST NIGHT.
YIKES!
WE HAD A FOOT OF SNOW LAST NIGHT, FOLLOWED BY A FREEZING RAIN
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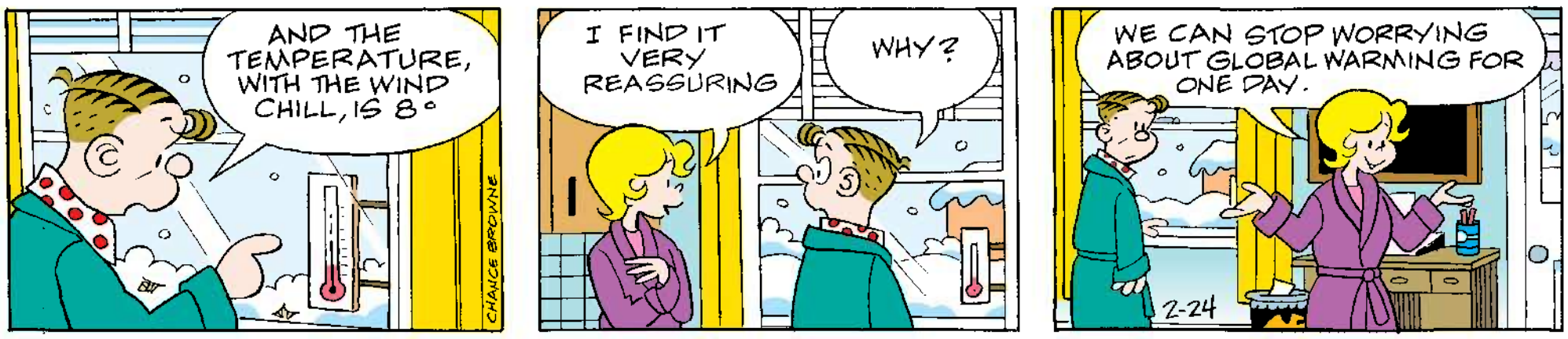
EVERYTHING IS COVERED WITH ICE
A HUGE TREE LIMB FELL DOWN IN THE BACKYARD


AND THE TEMPERATURE, WITH THE WIND CHILL, IS 8°
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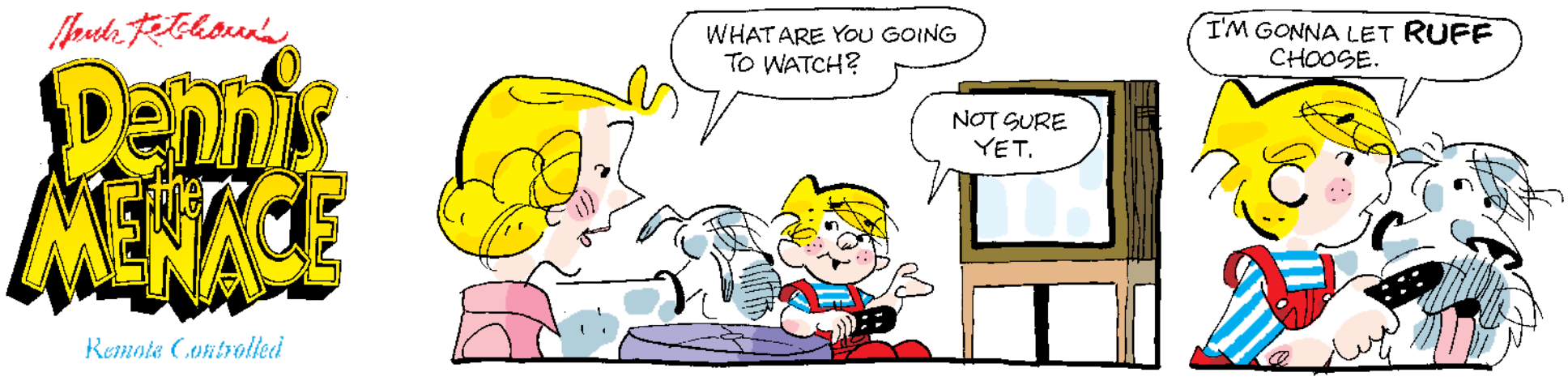
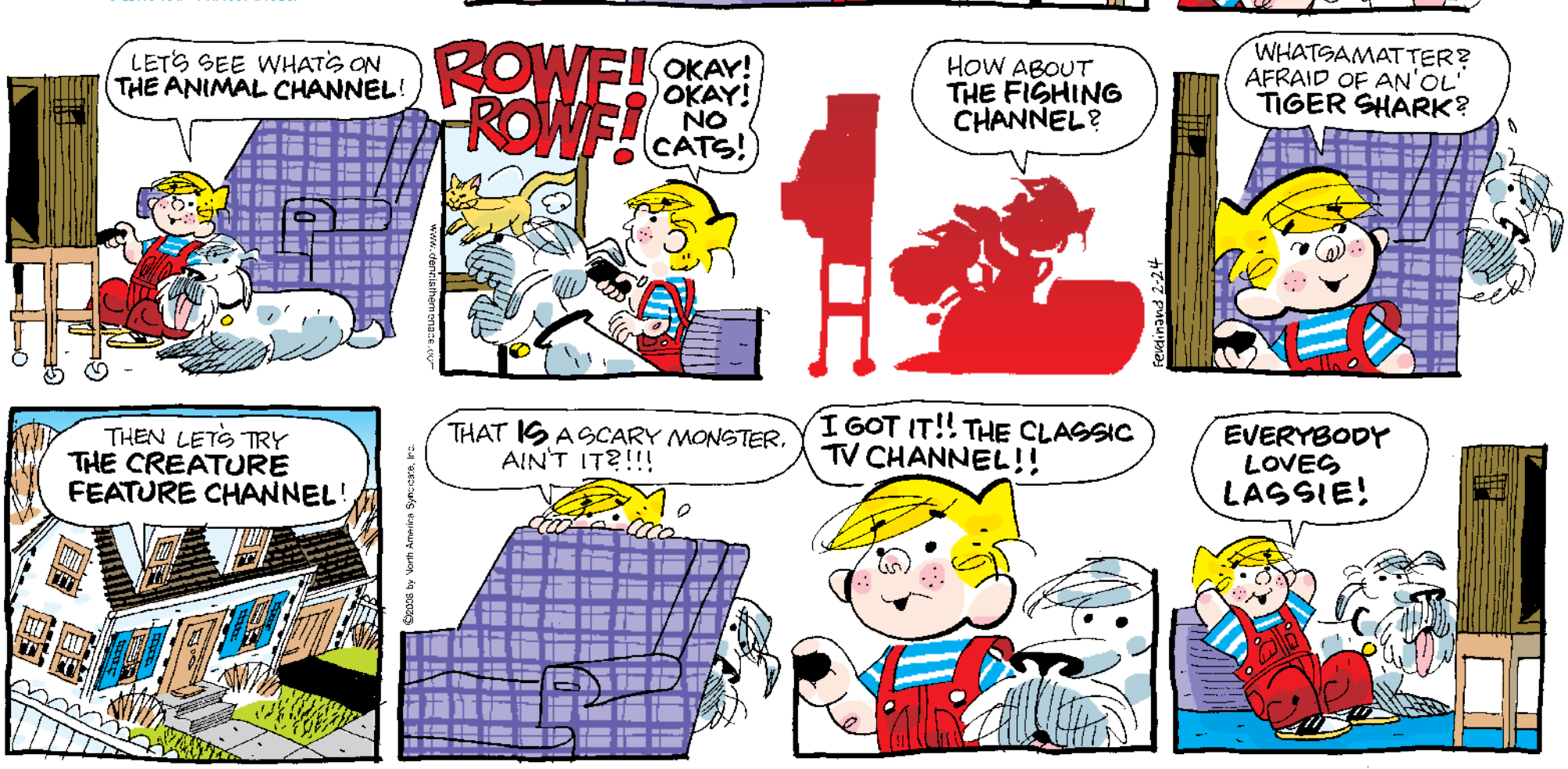
WHY?
WE CAN STOP WORRYING ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING FOR ONE DAY.
2-24


Hank Ketcham's
Dennis the MENACE
Remote Controlled
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO WATCH?
NOT SURE YET.
I'M GONNA LET RUFF CHOOSE.


LET'S SEE WHAT'S ON THE ANIMAL CHANNEL!
ROWF! ROWF!
OKAY! OKAY! NO CATS!
www.dennisthemenace.com
HOW ABOUT THE FISHING CHANNEL?
WHATSAMATTER? AFRAID OF AN'OL' TIGER SHARK?
Ferdinand 2-24
THEN LET'S TRY THE CREATURE FEATURE CHANNEL!
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YOU SPEND SO MUCH TIME PLAYING WITH YOUR HEAVY EQUIPMENT TOYS, SO I BOUGHT YOU BOXERS WITH TRACTORS AND TRUCKS ON THEM!
SINCE YOU SPEND SO MUCH TIME PRETENDING AND READING FANTASY BOOKS, I BOUGHT YOU UNICORN AND FAIRY BOXERS.
WHY DO I HAVE UNDERWEAR WITH POTATO CHIPS AND TVs ON THEM??
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2-24

Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Stop being the wool-gathering Lamb, and start turning that dream project into reality. You have the ideas, the drive and the charisma to persuade others to follow your lead. So do it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You've scored some big successes. But remember that all hardworking Ferdinands and Ferdinandas need some time to restore their energies and refresh their spirits.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You're gaining a stronger mental image of what you're trying to achieve. Now look for the facts that will help get this to develop from a concept into a solid proposal.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Some of you eager-to-please Moon Children might want to delay some decisions until midweek, when you can again think more with your head than your heart.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A new business venture seems to offer everything you've been looking for. But be careful that that rosy picture doesn't betray traces of red ink under the surface.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A volatile situation needs the kind of thoughtful and considerate care you can provide right now. There'll be plenty of time later to analyze what might have gone wrong.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Your loyalty to a friend in a tough situation earns you respect from people you care about. Those who criticize you don't understand what friendship is all about.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Your strong work ethic is rewarded with the kind of challenging opportunity you love to tackle. Now, go ahead and celebrate with family and/or close friends.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A legal matter you thought had been finally resolved could require a second look. But don't make any moves without consulting your lawyer.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Taking charge is what you like to do, and since you do it so well, expect to be asked to lead a special group. This could open an exciting new vista for you.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) An important matter might wind up being entrusted to you for handling. The responsibility is heavy, but you'll have support from people able and eager to help.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A spouse or partner might make an important, even life-changing, suggestion. Consider it carefully. It could hold some of the answers you've both been looking for.

BORN THIS WEEK: You always try to do the right thing, and for the right reasons. No wonder people have come to depend on you.

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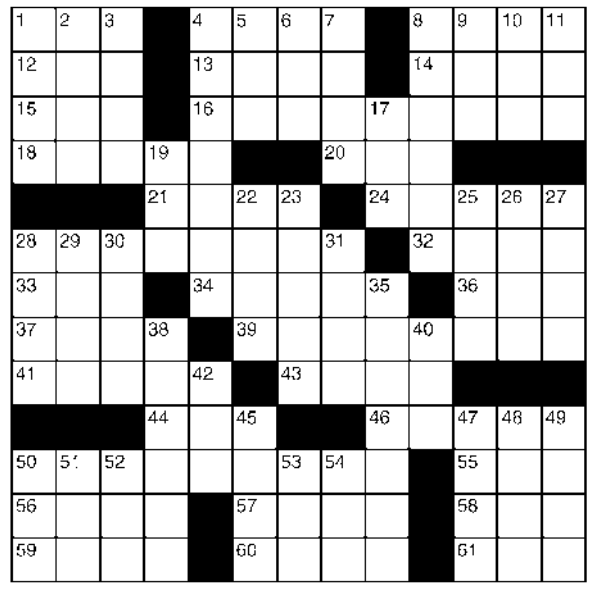
King Crossword



ACROSS
1 Try the tea
4 Carvey or Delany
8 Cut down to size
12 Bill's partner
13 Smell
14 Trevi toss, once
15 Render speechless
16 Homeowners' expenses
18 Disney deer
20 Total
21 Organic compound
24 Business bigwig
28 And
32 "Clue" weapon
33 Mimic
34 Poisonous plant
36 Greek H
37 Line of fashion?
39 "Beloved" author Toni
41 Archimedes' device
43 In the vicinity
44 Brillo competitor
46 Forbidden
50 Message transmission method
55 Samovar
56 Diamond Head site
57 Hebrew month
58 Moment
59 Support
60 Nurse's trayload
61 Weeding tool

DOWN
1 Wound cover
2 Waterloo is there
3 Verse
4 Popular pizza chain
5 Commotion
6 Neither mate
7 Decoupage and macrame
8 Din
9 Predetermine
10 Raw rock
11 — de deux
17 Big Red or Orbit
19 Spell-down
22 Egg
23 Edsel, e.g.
25 Leaves
26 Engaged in
27 Slender
28 Factor in Einstein's equation
29 Oil cartel
30 Caboose's position
31 Exceptional
35 Lunar dents
38 Disarrange
40 George's brother
42 Calamity
45 Con game
47 Clinton predecessor
48 Sandwich treat
49 Formerly
50 Broom closet item
51 Scull need
52 Plato's P
53 Praiseful rendition
54 Mid-June honoree

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top ten

Most Ridiculous Diets

1. The Atkins Diet
2. The Writing Diet
3. Cider Vinegar Diet
4. 3-Day Diet/ Hot Dog Diet
5. Russian Air Force Diet
6. Blood-Type Diet
7. Slim Fast
8. Cabbage Soup Diet
9. The Cereal Diet
10. Dr. Siegal's Cookie Diet

Source: www.DivineCaroline.com

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KING CROSSWORD LAST SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

M	A	S	S	■	P	O	P	■	W	R	A	P
A	L	O	E	V	E	R	A	■	E	A	R	L
D	E	S	S	E	R	T	S	■	A	S	I	A
■	■	■	A	R	K	■	S	A	S	H	A	Y
C	L	I	M	B	■	V	O	C	E	■	■	■
A	I	D	E	■	R	E	V	I	L	E	D	■
D	E	L	■	H	E	X	E	D	■	Y	O	U
■	D	E	L	I	V	E	R	■	F	E	L	T
■	■	■	E	K	E	D	■	A	I	S	L	E
G	A	R	N	E	R	■	B	R	R	■	■	■
A	L	I	T	■	S	T	R	E	S	S	E	D
D	E	L	I	■	A	W	E	A	T	H	E	R
S	E	L	L	■	L	O	W	■	S	A	N	S

United States

AP survey: Superdelegates jump to Obama

AMERICA VOTES

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Democratic superdelegates are starting to follow the voters—straight to Barack Obama.

In just the past two weeks, more than two dozen of them have climbed aboard his presidential campaign, according to a survey by The Associated Press. At the same time, Hillary Rodham Clinton's are beginning to jump ship, abandoning her for Obama or deciding they now are undecided.

The result: He's narrowing her once-commanding lead among these "superdelegates," the Democratic office holders and party officials who automatically attend the national convention and can vote for whomever they choose.

As Obama has reeled off 11 straight primary victories, some of the superdelegates are having second—or third—thoughts about their public commitments.

Take John Perez, a Californian who first endorsed John Edwards and then backed Clinton. Now, he says, he is undecided.

"Given where the race is at right now, I think it's very important for us to play a role around bringing the party together around the candidate that people have chosen, as opposed to advocating for our own choice," he said in an interview.

Clinton still leads among superdelegates—241 to 181, according to the AP survey. But her total is down two in the past two weeks, while Obama's is up 25. Since the primaries started, at least three Clinton superdelegates have switched to Obama, including Rep. David Scott of Georgia, who changedhis endorsement after Obama won 80 percent of the primary vote in Scott's district. At least two other Clinton backers have switched to undecided.

Clinton

Obama

None of Obama's have publicly strayed, according to the AP tally.

There are nearly 800 Democratic superdelegates, making them an important force in a nomination race as close as this one. Both campaigns are furiously lobbying them.

"Holy buckets!" exclaimed Audra Ostergard of Nebraska. "Michelle Obama and I are playing phone tag."

Billi Gosh, a Vermont superdelegate who backs Clinton, got a phone call from the candidate herself this week.

"As superdelegates, we have the opportunity to change our mind, so she's just connecting with me," Gosh said. "I couldn't believe she was able to fit in calls like that to her incredibly busy schedule."

In Utah, two Clinton superdelegates said they continue to support the New York senator—for now.

"We'll see what happens," said Karen Hale. Likewise, fellow superdelegate Helen Langan said, "We'll see."

Other supporters are more steadfast.

"She's still in the race, isn't she? So I'm still supporting her," said Belinda Biafore, a superdelegate from West Virginia.

Obama has piled up the most victories in primaries and caucuses, giving him the overall lead in delegates, 1,362 to 1,266.5. Clinton's half delegate came from the global primary sponsored by the Democrats Abroad.

It will take 2,025 delegates to secure the nomination at this summer's national convention in Denver. If Clinton and Obama continue to split delegates in elections, neither will reach the mark without support from the superdelegates.

That has the campaigns fighting over the proper role for superdelegates, who can support any candidate they want. Obama argues it would be unfair for them to go against the outcome of the primaries and caucuses.

"I think it is important, given how hard Senator Clinton and I have been working, that these primaries and caucuses count for something," Obama said during Thursday night's debate in Austin, Texas.

ACROSS THE NATION

Calif. man gets 29 years in senior scam

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An 81-year-old man was sentenced to 29 years in prison Friday in an investment scam that prosecutors say seeped across half the country and bilked 1,800 people, many of them elderly, of about $190 million. John Heath, who was convicted last month alongside his son Daniel Heath and another man, also was ordered to pay $117 million in restitution to the clients who invested directly through him. He dabbed at his eyes during the hearing and left court in a wheelchair. Jurors found the three guilty of running a Ponzi scheme that funneled money from new investors to pay off people who had already pumped in cash. John Heath was convicted on 52 counts including grand theft, selling false securities and theft from the elderly.

Congressman indicted in Ariz. land deal

PHOENIX (AP)—Federal authorities announced corruption charges Friday accusing Rep. Rick Renzi of engineering a swap of federally owned mining land to benefit himself and a former business partner and stealing from his insurance company's clients. A lengthy federal investigation that had put the three-term Republican congressman under a cloud for more than a year culminated in a 26-page indictment issued Thursday against him and two other men. Renzi announced Aug. 23 that he wouldn't run for re-election in Arizona's mostly rural 1st Congressional District. The indictment's 35 counts include charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, money laundering, insurance fraud and extortion. Most of the charges allege Renzi, 49, used his office to promote a land swap to collect on a debt owed by James W. Sandlin of Sherman, Texas, a former Renzi associate.

Woman charged in Minn. bus crash deaths

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The driver of a van that hit a school bus in a crash that killed four children was charged Friday with four counts of criminal vehicular homicide and two lesser charges, authorities said. The woman, identified as Alianiss Nunez Morales, 23, of Minneota, failed to stop at a stop sign Tuesday before hitting the bus, which was carrying 28 students from Lakeview School, a prosecutor said. The accident happened near the small town of Cottonwood in southwestern Minnesota. Morales was also charged with a stop sign violation and for driving without a valid license, Lyon County Attorney Richard Maes said. Authorities said Morales is not the woman's real name, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were trying to figure out her true identity.

Ex-Arizona Gov. Mecham dies at 83

PHOENIX (AP)—Evan Mecham, a firebrand conservative who served 15 months as Arizona's governor before a dramatic impeachment trial removed him from office in 1988, died Thursday, a former aide said. He was 83. Mecham, who always blamed his downfall on political enemies, had been in deteriorating health with Alzheimer's disease for years and was at the Arizona State Veteran Home in Phoenix until recent weeks, when he went into hospice care, said state Sen. Karen Johnson, who was Mecham's aide while he was governor. Mecham, a millionaire automobile dealer who served in the state Senate for two years in the 1960s, ran for governor four times before he finally won a three-way race in November 1986 with 40 percent of the vote.

McCain defends lobbyist ties

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Sen. John McCain said Friday that while lobbyists serve as close advisers to his presidential campaign, they are honorable and he is not influenced by corruption in the system.

McCain, who has styled himself as an enemy of special interests, defended having lobbyists working for his campaign. He is the expected Republican presidential nominee.

"These people have honorable records, and they're honorable people, and I'm proud to have them as part of my team," McCain told reporters following a town hall meeting in Indianapolis.

The issue of lobbying and influence has arisen in published reports, first in *The New York Times* and then in *The Washington Post*, suggesting that McCain had an inappropriate relationship with a female lobbyist and advanced the interests of her clients. McCain on Thursday emphatically denied the reports.

Siding with McCain, the White House accused the Times of repeatedly trying to "drop a bombshell" on Republican presidential nominees to undermine their candidacies.

White House deputy press secretary Scott Stanzel noted at a Friday morning briefing that the story has received a lot of attention.

"I think a lot of people here in this building, with experience in a couple campaigns, have grown accustomed to the fact that during the course of the campaign, seemingly on maybe a monthly basis leading up to the convention and maybe a weekly basis after that, *The New York Times* does try to drop a bombshell on the Republican nominee.

WINTER DIP AP

In this photo released by the Wildlife Conservation Society, Tundra, a male polar bear, breaks the ice so he can go for a swim in the Bronx Zoo's outdoor pool, in New York, Friday, Feb. 22, 2008. Up to a foot of snow on Friday interrupted what had been a mild winter in much of the Northeast and created havoc for travelers, forcing the cancellation of more than 1,100 flights in the New York area alone.

Enzyte maker found guilty of fraud

CINCINNATI (AP)—A federal court jury on Friday found the owner of a company that sells "male enhancement" tablets and other herbal supplements guilty of conspiracy to commit mail fraud, bank fraud and money laundering.

Steve Warshak, whose conviction was reported Friday by The Cincinnati Enquirer, is founder and president of Berkeley Premium Nutraceuticals, which distributes Enzyte and a number of products alleged to boost energy, manage weight, reduce memory loss and aid restful sleep.

Television ads for Enzyte feature "Smiling Bob," a goofy, grinning man whose life gets much better after he uses the product, which allegedly boosted his sexual performance.

Warshak, 40, could face more than 20 years in prison and his company could have to forfeit tens of millions of dollars.

Messages seeking comment from Warshak's Boston attorney Martin Weinberg and Assistant U.S. Attorney Anne Porter were left at their offices Friday night.

Alaska disputes polar bear threat

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—The polar bear can be found in just one place in America—Alaska—and is perhaps as much a symbol of the state as, say, alligators are of Florida. So you might think Alaska's politicians would be pounding on doors in Washington to protect it.

You'd be wrong.

As the federal government decides whether to list polar bears as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, Gov. Sarah Palin and the state's Republican congressional delegation are solidly opposed to the idea.

Listing the polar bear would trigger a plan to protect the shrinking Arctic sea ice. And that, Alaskans fear, could dim chances for a proposed project that could bring the state's next big boom: a natural gas pipeline that would tap the North Slope's vast reserves.

"This is yet another example of how a law with the best of intentions has been subverted by the lawyers for the extreme environmental organizations and the liberal Democratic leadership," Rep. Don Young said.

Alaska's elected officials reject climate models that predict a complete summer meltdown of the polar ice cap by 2030 or sooner. They also dispute a U.S. Geological Survey study that predicts polar bears in Alaska could be wiped out by 2050.

Asia

East Timor extends emergency rule

DILI, East Timor (AP)—East Timor's Parliament on Friday extended by 30 days a state of emergency imposed after attacks by suspected rebels on the country's two top leaders.

The state of emergency, which bans rallies and imposes a nighttime curfew, was due to end Saturday.

After a request by the acting president, lawmakers voted 34-12 to extend it by 30 days.

"Criminal groups still walk free and are a serious threat to the organs of the state and to the people as a whole," the government said in statement after requesting the extension.

Also Friday, more than 1,000 police and soldiers paraded in the capital, Dili, in an apparent show of force following the Feb. 11 attacks that critically wounded President Jose Ramos-Horta, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

A group of dismissed soldiers is suspected in the strikes.

"Wherever they are hiding, in rat holes or under stones, we will chase them," East Timor army commander Brig. Gen. Matan Ruak said. "Our operations will also be against their supporters."

Lozada files kidnapping complaint vs six

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A key witness in a corruption scandal hounding the Philippine government filed a kidnapping complaint Friday against six officials accused of abducting him from Manila's airport to keep him from testifying in the Senate.

Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada Jr., a former government consultant, has testified about alleged large-scale bribery in a US$330 million (€224 million) government broadband contract with Chinese telecommunications giant ZTE Corp. that is under investigation by the opposition-dominated Senate.

Lozada filed the kidnapping and attempted murder complaint against his former boss, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, national police Chief Avelino Razon, airport security chief Angel Atutubo and three airport security officers.

Senior RP military commander under investigation for graft

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A senior Philippine military commander is under investigation for alleged corruption in a move intended to show the armed forces is tackling graft, the army said Friday.

Maj. Gen. Jose Barbieto, commander of the 4th Infantry Division in the southern Philippines, relinquished his duties to his deputy last week following allegations that he and other military personnel extorted money from new recruits or those seeking reinstatement, army spokesman Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres said in a statement.

AP

ANTI-ARROYO MARCH
Students march around their campus during a protest at the country's premier university, The University of the Philippines, in Quezon city north of Manila, Philippines, Friday Feb. 22, 2008. Calls for another "people power" to oust Arroyo are mounting following recent testimony by star witness Rodolfo Lozada Jr. in a Senate corruption inquiry that has implicated the president's husband.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Bomb kills 10 in northwestern Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—A roadside bomb exploded Friday as a wedding party was passing nearby in Pakistan's volatile northwest, killing at least 10 people and wounding four others, police said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the blast in Swat valley, a former tourist destination about 100 miles from the capital, Islamabad. The area is home to Taliban and al-Qaida-linked militants. Many of the victims in the blast were wedding guests, said Ayaz Khan, a local police official.

Military: 21 die in Sri Lanka fighting

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Scattered battles in the war-torn jungles of northern Sri Lanka killed 20 separatist guerrillas and a soldier, the military said Friday, while the rebels accused the government of killing eight civilians in an airstrike. The violence came as fighting between the two sides has sharply increased in recent weeks, with the government vowing to retake rebel-controlled territory and crush the Tamil Tigers after more than two decades of warfare. On Friday, soldiers fired at a group of rebels who tried to infiltrate the government-held Welioya region, killing six guerrillas, the military said in a statement.

NKorea opens reactor to foreign media

YONGBYON, North Korea (AP)—North Korea opened its main nuclear reactor to foreign media for the first time Friday in a bid to show that it is complying with a disarmament accord to disable the facility. Broadcaster APTN was permitted to visit the reactor facility in Yongbyon, the heart of North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Its footage showed North Korean workers in white head-to-toe protective suits removing spent nuclear fuel from the facility's 5 megawatt reactor. The visit came as six-nation negotiations on the nuclear dispute are stalled over differences on whether North Korea has fully declared its nuclear programs under an October accord reached with the United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea.

World

IAEA: Iran disputes atomic arms evidence

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—The U.N. nuclear watchdog said Friday that Iran is defying a U.N. Security Council ban on uranium enrichment and accusing the U.S. and its allies of fabricating information to back up claims that Tehran is making nuclear weapons.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said there was a "very strong case" for moving forward with a third round of sanctions against Tehran, while Iran said the report's findings confirmed that its nuclear program is a peaceful one.

"There is very good reason after this report to proceed to the third Security Council resolution," Rice said, adding that the report "demonstrates that whatever the Iranians may be doing to try to clean up some elements of the past, it is inadequate."

The 11-page report obtained by The Associated Press said Iran "has not suspended its enrichment-related activities," despite two sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions over fears the program might be used to make weapons-grade uranium instead of the nuclear fuel Iran says it is interested in.

Fidel Castro: I'm ready for a vacation

HAVANA (AP)—Fidel Castro said Friday he made the right call when he called it quits, and is exhausted and overdue for a vacation. But the old man can't put away his pen just yet, not when U.S. presidential candidates are one-upping each other to show who's toughest on Cuba.

After a Thursday night debate in which Democrats Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama argued about how best to push for change in Cuba, Republican John McCain bluntly said Friday that he hopes Castro will die "very soon."

With comments like these flying around the campaign trail and the White House dissing his younger brother Raul as a "dictator lite," Castro said he couldn't hold back.

"I enjoyed observing the embarrassing position of all the presidential candidates in the United States. One by one, they could be seen forced to proclaim their immediate demands of Cuba so as not to alienate a single voter," Castro wrote.

AP

The wreckage of a plane that crashed Thursday, killing all 46 passengers and crew members on board, is seen in a mountainous area near Merida, Venezuela, Friday, Feb. 22, 2008.

46 passengers killed in Venezuela plane crash

MERIDA, Venezuela (AP)—A Venezuelan passenger plane slammed into a steep mountainside in the Andes, killing all 46 people on board, officials said Friday.

The twin-engine plane was shattered to bits upon impact, leaving only its tail largely intact and a swath of charred ground amid scrub brush at an altitude of 13,500 feet.

Search teams reached the remote spot by helicopter and rappelled down with ropes to reach the rugged crash site, said Gen. Ramon Vinas, head of the civil aviation authority. "By the way it crashed we can determine there are no survivors," he said.

President Hugo Chavez declared that "Venezuela is in mourning" and called for a full investigation.

The French-made ATR 42-300 carrying 43 passengers and three crew members crashed Thursday shortly after takeoff from the Andean city of Merida, a popular tourist destination wedged between soaring mountain peaks.

The victims, mostly Venezuelans, also included three Colombians, identified as Hugo Juan Farfan, Juan Pablo Ruiz and Luis Vargas, and a U.S. citizen, Vivian Guarch, officials said.

Guarch, 53, was an employee of a Miami branch of Stanford Bank who was on a business trip to Merida, the company said.

The Santa Barbara Airlines flight crashed in an area known as Los Conejos plateau within the Sierra La Culata National Park.

Kosovo Serb protesters attack UN police force

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA, Kosovo (AP)—Violent protests rocked Serb-dominated northern Kosovo on Friday, as mobs chanting "Kosovo is ours!" hurled stones, bottles and firecrackers at U.N. police guarding a bridge that divides Serbs from ethnic Albanians.

The scenes evoked memories of the carnage unleashed by former Serb autocrat Slobodan Milosevic the last time Kosovo tried to break away from Serbia, which considers the territory its ancestral homeland.

There were disturbing signs the riots in Belgrade, Serbia, and in Mitrovica have the blessing of nationalists in the Serbian government. The government hopes somehow to undo the loss of the beloved province, the site of an epic battle between Serbs and Turks in 1389.

Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica's authorities have repeatedly vowed to reclaim the land, despite U.S. and other Western recognition of Kosovo's statehood. Some hard-line government ministers have praised the violent protests as "legitimate"—and in line with government policies of retaining control over Serb-populated areas.

Focus

The US troop surge, a year later

The U.S.-led forces have successfully tamped down violence, and the Pentagon has forged critical pacts with Sunni fighters against al-Qaida in Iraq, which is trying to regroup in northern parts of the country.

BAGHDAD (AP)—A year ago in Baghdad: Shiite militiamen and Sunni insurgents owned entire neighborhoods and key areas beyond. Iraq's government was adrift, and U.S. commanders weighed the real possibility of being trapped in a full-scale civil war.

Washington's response was "the surge," launched Feb. 14, 2007, with the 82nd Airborne as the vanguard of an American troop buildup that would climb to 30,000 extra U.S. soldiers by the summer.

A year later—through a mix of military might, new allies and some fortunate timing—Iraq looks very different.

The crackdown in Baghdad and surrounding areas was seen as a last ditch effort to salvage the American mission in Iraq and, in the words of President Bush, give Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki "breathing space."

The concern now is how to build on the gains as the surge forces are pulled back, and some major challenges appear far from any clear answers: whether Iraq's Shiite majority will further fray into rival factions and how much Iran will exert its considerable influence.

Al-Maliki's government is still struggling to get firm footing, but has recently tried to push through some of the U.S.-demanded political reforms for reconciliation.

The U.S.-led forces have successfully tamped down violence, and the Pentagon has forged critical pacts with Sunni fighters against al-Qaida in Iraq, which is trying to regroup in northern parts of the country.

After a sharp initial spike in military and civilian casualties, the numbers make a strong case that the surge generally accomplished its main goal.

Before February 2007 was out, 1,801 Iraqis and 81 U.S. soldiers would die. By contrast, January 2008 saw figures of 609 and 39, respectively.

The bulk of the surge troops are expected to be pulled out by summer. On Monday, Defense Secretary Robert Gates endorsed taking another assessment of Iraqi security in midyear before deciding on any further cuts in U.S. troop strength.

Anbar province, which stretches to the Saudi Arabian, Jordanian and Syrian borders west of Baghdad, fell virtually silent. It had been the heart of the Sunni insurgency and a bastion for al-Qaida in Iraq.

The Americans got lucky there. Sunni tribal leaders who had been fighting the Americans, began in late 2006 to turn on al-Qaida, fed up with the terrorist organization's brutality and austere brand of Islam.

U.S. forces quickly exploited the shift and began sponsoring similar movements in Baghdad and regions to the north and south. An estimated 80,000 members of the so-called Awakening Councils or Concerned Local Citizens are now fighting with—not against—U.S. and Iraqi forces.

Many of the new allies are on the American payroll, taking home minimal salaries while the U.S. tries, with limited success, to persuade the al-Maliki government to bring them into the army, police and a civilian corps of workers to rebuild the shattered country.

Into that mix, radical anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr placed a freeze on his feared Mahdi Army militia, causing a dramatic fall in death-squad killings in the capital and in attacks on American forces.

The first half of the surge year saw enough casualties to make 2007 the deadliest for American troops, with 126 killed in May alone, along with 2,155 Iraqis. In all, at least 831 Americans have died in 12 months of the surge.

The sharply lower figures for the second half of 2007 have only returned the pace of U.S. losses to what they were in late 2003 and early 2004. The Iraqi death toll is back down to where it was at the close of 2005.

What's more, much of the key legislation designed to spur reconciliation among Iraq's Sunni and Shiite Arabs and the Kurds still languishes, with the Shiite al-Maliki either too politically weak or disinclined to take major steps toward a greater Sunni role.

And then there is Iran.

As the U.S. begins reversing the expansion of troop strength—back to the pre-surge levels of about 130,000—Iran has quietly placed itself in the control room of Iraq's future. Tehran has major military and political tools available to it until U.S. forces eventually leave and has sunk deep roots inside the country's fertile Shiite political power structure.

While the Americans say they have seen a decline in Iranian funding and arming of rogue members al-Sadr's Shiite militia, six key Shiite figures from across the political spectrum have told The Associated Press that Iran is pressing ahead in several directions.

Iran is gaming its future in Iraq on three fronts, the most public of which has been face-to-face meetings between U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Kazemi Qomi. Another session could be held in March.

While Crocker has insisted the talks have not veered from topics surrounding Iraqi security, the Iraqi officials, some of whom sat in on the meetings, say their scope has expanded.

The result, the officials said, was Iran's pledge to stop backing the Mahdi Army in return for the Bush administration lowering its rhetoric about Iran's nuclear program. The Iraqis who spoke about the talks said they believed the release of the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate in December was a quid pro quo to Tehran for it having turned its back on the Mahdi Army.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

The NIE, in an about-face, said Iran had halted its secret attempts to build nuclear weapons in 2003, contrary to White House claims that Iran was using a civilian nuclear energy program as cover to build nuclear weapons.

Since then, Washington's pronouncements have softened significantly.

On the second front, Iran has shunned the Mahdi Army, but has continued sending arms, fighters and money into Iraq. The leaders of these groups of fighters take orders from Iran and are known as the Ettelaat, shorthand for Iranian intelligence.

The Iraqi officials who spoke to the AP said that after al-Sadr announced a freeze on his militia in August, the Iranians sent in seven Ettelaat commanders—Iraqis loyal to Iran who had been training and handling elite Mahdi Army groups in Iran. These at the time had broken with the mainstream militia over the freeze.

The commanders were said to have slowly infiltrated with more than 1,000 men armed and trained by Iran, with orders to continue harassing the Americans with roadside bombings, mortar and rocket attacks—a one-year high of 12 on the Army's 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division in January alone, the military said.

The Ettelaat force in Iraq is recruiting more fighters from among disaffected Mahdi Army foot soldiers and commanders of the so-called "special groups," not only to keep American forces off balance but also as a sleeper brigade that would open all-out warfare should the United States attack Iran, a real fear in Tehran, the Iraqi officials said.

Top U.S. commander Gen. David Petraeus said in a recent interview that he had not heard of an Iranian-sponsored group by that name, and noted that Iran's senior leaders have pledged to their Iraqi counterparts to stop fostering violent groups in this country.

But he noted the Americans were always alert for new tactics from Tehran.

"What we're trying to figure out is, has there been some change in behavior? It may have been," he said.

Petraeus said the Iranians continue to use many avenues to infiltrate and are trying to "provide assistance to and gain influence in various organizations in Iraq—some political, some militia, some of these very closely related to the Quds Force and (Mahdi Army) special groups."

Politically, Iran has now cut ties with al-Sadr, having decided his usefulness as a tactical tool against American forces has run its course. Now, the officials said, Iran has thrown its full backing behind the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council of Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, the country's most powerful Shiite political insider.

Ironically, al-Hakim has been a cornerstone of U.S. efforts to build a moderate Shiite political structure in the country. He has been used by Washington as a counterbalance to more radical Shiite tendencies and is seen as more open to sharing some power with the country's Sunni Muslim minority, which ran Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

US soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division prepare to enter and clear a building during fighting in Fallujah, Iraq.

Life & Style

Dog saved by Marine gets permanent home

SAN DIEGO (AP)—It began with a simple act of kindness to save an abused, injured dog from becoming one more victim in the Iraq war.

But what followed for Marine Maj. Brian Dennis and the mutt was a tale of friendship and loyalty that spanned miles, borders, and overcame long odds—a tale that took a turn Friday afternoon when the dog arrived at San Diego's Lindbergh Field airport.

"This dog who had been through a lifetime of fighting, war, abuse ... is going to live the good life," Dennis told his family in an e-mail from Iraq.

The tale unfolded in October, a few months after Dennis deployed to Iraq from San Diego to work as part of the military team building infrastructure along the Syria-Iraq border and training Iraqi forces to take over.

Dennis, 36, of St. Pete Beach, Fla., had volunteered for the assignment. It was a departure from his role as a fighter pilot. He had seen the country from the air, but it was different on the ground.

Dennis wrote stories home about the reciprocal relationship that desert dogs, strays wandering outside border towns, had with Iraqis.

"The dogs get to eat the Iraqi scraps and have a home in the middle of the desert," he wrote in an e-mail. "The Iraqis get an incredible early warning system; these dogs hear anything approaching from miles away and go nuts and scramble to defend their territory."

While on patrol in the Anbar province, Dennis spotted what appeared to be a gray and white, male German shepherd-border collie mix. He named the dog Nubs after learning someone cut the ears off believing it would make the dog more aggressive and alert.

Within weeks, Nubs was greeting Dennis during routine patrol stops along border communities. The Marines fed him bits of their food and by November, the Marine and his unit were keeping an eye out for the dog, which routinely chased their Humvees when they departed.

AP

Jeff Forest holds Nubs as Chrissy Sjoberg pets him after the dog arrived at San Diego's Lindbergh Field Friday, Feb. 22, 2008. Nubs was adopted by Marine Corps Major Brian Dennis who befriended the dog in Iraq. Dennis' friends will take care of the dog until Dennis returns from his tour of duty in Iraq.

Life on the run, however, was taking a toll on the dog. He had lost a tooth and been bitten in the neck. In late December, Dennis found Nubs near death in freezing temperatures. The dog had been stabbed with a screwdriver.

Dennis rubbed antibiotic cream on the wound and slept with Nubs to keep him warm.

"I really expected when I woke up for watch he would be dead," Dennis wrote. "Somehow he made it through the night."

Dennis thought he had seen the last of the dog days later when his squad headed back to its command post some 65 miles away. He couldn't take the dog with him and watched as it tried to follow the Humvees away from the border.

Two days later, while Dennis and a comrade were working on a Humvee, he looked up and saw the dog staring at him.

"Somehow that crazy damned dog tracked us," he wrote Jan. 9.

But the reunion was short lived. Military policy prohibits having pets in war zones, and Dennis was given four days to get the dog off the base or kill him.

The decision was easy: Nubs was going to San Diego. The logistics, though, were anything but easy.

With help from his Iraqi interpreter, Dennis managed to find a Jordanian veterinarian to get the care and paperwork needed to get the dog to the states. He also negotiated the red tape to get Nubs across the border into Jordan.

His family and close friends helped raise the $3,500 needed to get the dog from Amman, Jordan, to San Diego, said his mother, Marsha Cargo.

"I just can't believe it. Out there in the middle of nowhere these two find each other," Cargo said.

A colleague in San Diego agreed to care for the dog and have it trained until Dennis returns in March from Iraq.

"We anticipate a real steep learning curve for Nubs," Capt. Eric Sjoberg said. "We want him to learn to just be a dog."

For now, though, Dennis will settle for the knowledge that Nubs is finally safe—and waiting for his master to follow him.

AP

This image provided by Marine Major Brian Dennis, of St. Pete Beach, Fl., shows Dennis holding his adopted dog, Nubs, near the Iraq-Jordan border Monday, Feb. 4, 2008.

Remember when? Man with big memory does

LA CROSSE, Wis. (AP)—For as long as he can remember, Brad Williams has been able to recall the most trifling dates and details about his life.

For example, he can tell you it was Aug. 18, 1965, when his family stopped at Red Barn Hamburger during a road trip through Michigan. He was 8 years old at the time. And he had a burger, of course.

"It was a Wednesday," recalled Williams, now 51. "We stayed at a motel that night in Clare, Michigan. It seemed more like a cabin."

To Williams and his family, his ability to recall events—and especially dates—is a regular source of amusement. But according to one expert, Williams' skill might rank his memory among the best in the world. Doctors are now studying him, and a woman with similar talents, hoping to achieve a deeper understanding of memory.

Williams, a radio anchor in La Crosse, seems to enjoy having his memory tested. Name a date from the last 40 years and, after a few moments, he can typically tell you what he did that day and what was in the news.

How about Nov. 7, 1991?

"Let's see," he mused, gazing into the distance for about five seconds. "That would be around when Magic Johnson announced he had HIV. Yes, a Thursday. There was a big snowstorm here the week before."

He went on to identify correctly some 20 other events including the birth of the first test-tube baby in 1978, the toxic-gas leak in Bhopal, India, in 1984, and Billie Jean King's victory over Bobby Riggs in tennis' "Battle of the Sexes" in 1973.

"I've always been this way," Williams said. "Growing up, I never really had reason to think I wasn't like everyone else."

So how does he do it?

"You want the Nobel Prize right now? Tell me that answer and I'll publish it," said Dr. James McGaugh, who has studied Williams since last summer. "We don't know. We do know that he carries this information with him, that it's detailed, that it's just there. That's what we want to know—why is it there?"

Williams' brother first contacted McGaugh, a research professor at the University of California, Irvine, after the neurobiologist published a case study of a similar person in the journal Neurocase in 2006.

That woman is in her mid-40s and was identified only by the initials A.J. She told McGaugh whenever she hears a date, memories from that date in previous years flood her mind like a running movie. The phenomenon, she laments, is "nonstop, uncontrollable and totally exhausting."

"Most have called it a gift, but I call it a burden," she wrote. "I run my entire life through my head every day and it drives me crazy!!!"

McGaugh and his colleagues subjected A.J. to a battery of psychological tests. Given a date at random, she was nearly flawless in recalling the day of the week and what she did that day. The details she provided invariably matched what she had written in diaries decades earlier.

Scientific literature documents people who could memorize a series of 50 to 100 random letters or digits. Another person read a 330-word story twice, then reproduced it nearly verbatim a year later.

But those research subjects remembered meaningless information. What distinguishes Williams and A.J. is their "superior autobiographical memory"—an above-average ability to remember dates and details from their distant past, McGaugh said.

"In subjects we regard as having this ability, they do better than 90 percent on the tests we provide," McGaugh said.

The tests typically involve reproducing personal information that can be corroborated with old scrapbooks, yearbooks and diaries, sources that McGaugh often tries to obtain from family members without the subjects' knowledge.

Other tests involve naming a notable public event and asking for its date, or vice versa.

Williams and A.J. both performed better on topics that interested them. Williams excels at pop-culture trivia such as Academy Award winners, but he stumbles on sports.

A lifelong bachelor and self-described Scrabble addict, he finished second when he appeared on "Jeopardy!" in 1990. He says he went 5-for-5 on "1984 movies" but tripped up on categories including "snakes" and "words that begin with 'kh'."

Because a person's interest in the information is a key factor in recall ability, some researchers doubt that Williams and A.J. are unique.

"If it's a truly amazing memory that just sucks things up, it shouldn't be based on how interesting something was to you," said Stephen Christman, a neuropsychologist at the University of Toledo in Ohio.

Christman, who wasn't involved in the research, pointed to baseball fanatics who remember obscure statistics because of their passion for the game. Perhaps, he speculated, A.J. obsesses so much over past events and relives them so frequently in her mind that it's now effortless for her to recall countless dates and events.

The number of people with comparable memory skills has been hard to pin down. After publishing his research with A.J., McGaugh heard from about 50 people claiming they had the same skill or, like Williams' brother, knew someone who might.

Of them, McGaugh and his colleagues have identified a third person—a 50-year-old Ohio man—who shows similar promise.

Ever since pointing his elder brother in McGaugh's direction, Eric Williams, 45, has been recording Brad's adventures for an upcoming documentary. The movie, to be titled "Unforgettable," is scheduled to be completed later this year.

"The human brain is the most complicated and important machinery in the known universe," McGaugh said. "My aim with this research isn't to cure Alzheimer's. It's to decrease the mystery of this marvelous machinery."

THREE WISE GUYS

Erectile-dysfunction ads, tissues vs. toilet paper

By JOE HEIM, JUSTIN RUDE and DAN ZAK

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Dear Wise Guys:

My question is about the imagery used in TV ads for drugs that treat erectile dysfunction. Why do they end up showing two people in separate bathtubs, outdoors in some beautiful setting in nature? The couple could be in a meadow, in the mountains or at a beach. They also show a couple in an outdoor pool with candles floating in the water. I don't get it! What do a pool and separate bathtubs have to do with erectile dysfunction? Why are they always outdoors? Is this some kind of mysterious guy code that only men can comprehend?—Linda

Dan: I, for one, find floating candles to be very erotic.

Justin: Yeah, floating candles are hot.

Joe: Well, that's nice to know, boys, but it doesn't really answer Linda's question. For help we turned to Tom Reichert, a professor of advertising at the University of Georgia and the author of "Sex in Consumer Culture: The Erotic Content of Media and Marketing" and "The Erotic History of Advertising."

"People who advertise products having to do with sex say there's a double standard and that the networks are much tougher on them as far as what they can show," he says.

So on TV they have to imply sex rather than depict it? "Exactly. It has to be more of a veiled reference."

And all the nature scenery? "I'm sure there's a really good explanation," Reichert says. "It's got to be an obtuse metaphor for getting back to the way we naturally are, your true natural self."

Yeah, nothing quite says natural like sitting in separate bathtubs in the middle of a meadow.

■ ■ ■

Dear Wise Guys:

I'm always pinching pennies. Can you tell me if it is cheaper to use tissues or toilet paper when blowing your nose?—Cheap Mom

Justin: You might indeed save a penny or two by using toilet paper, but you'd lose it all on the ointment you'd need to sooth your chapped beak. You might as well save yourself the time and peel off a few layers of skin with a nail file right now. There are plenty of easy was to save money (your kids can live on ramen noodles, right?), but cheaping out on tissue products is not one of them.

Joe: Free advice like that is nothing to sneeze at.

■ ■ ■

Dear Wise Guys:

In response to the reader who had a co-worker use dental floss in his cubicle:

I had a boss who not only flossed in his office, he would enter my office with the floss hanging from his teeth. He wanted to make sure that I didn't take more than 30 minutes for my lunch, so he would rush into my office without completing his hygiene. After putting up with this grossness for a few days, I decided to put an end to it. I waited for him, sitting at my desk with many strings of dental floss hanging from my teeth. He walked in with his floss dangling from his teeth but was totally embarrassed when he saw mine. He never did it again. This is true.—Maureen

Joe: Well, even if it wasn't true, it's gross enough that we feel obliged to print it.

Ken Kesey's family fights for wrestling

PLEASANT HILL, Ore. (AP)—Before Ken Kesey wrote "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," or stocked a psychedelic school bus with LSD and the Merry Pranksters to look for America, he was a wrestler.

He might never have written "Cuckoo's Nest," the 1962 novel that launched him to stardom, if he hadn't dislocated his shoulder wrestling for the University of Oregon.

The injury kept him out of the draft, allowing him to go to Wallace Stegner's writing seminar at Stanford University, where his job at the local veterans hospital gave him the setting for "Cuckoo's Nest" and the prototype for mean Nurse Ratched.

So when his alma mater decided to eliminate wrestling at the end of this season, it went down hard on the Kesey family farm. That's where Kesey is buried alongside his son Jed, the victim of a 1984 van crash during a University of Oregon wrestling team road trip. It's also where Furthur, the bus made famous by Kesey's 1964 odyssey and Tom Wolfe's book "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," awaits restoration.

"I know what Dad would do," said 46-year-old Zane Kesey, who also wrestled for Oregon. "It's just the kind of thing he would step up and attack when he sees something that's wrong, when it's something he's already shed so much soul for."

So last weekend, wearing his dad's American flag shirt, Zane Kesey fired up a newer version of

AP

Supporters of University of Oregon wrestling demonstrate on campus in Eugene, Ore., Feb. 16, 2008 aboard the late author Ken Kesey's psychedelic bus, "Further".

Furthur (named Further), called on Oregon wrestlers and alums to "Get on the bus," and with original Merry Prankster George Walker at the wheel roared through the Eugene campus.

Loudspeakers blared "Save Oregon wrestling," drums beat, a brass bell clanged, and wrestlers handed out fliers as they circled McArthur Court, the aging arena where Ken Kesey wrestled from 1955 to 1957, posting a winning percentage of .806 that stands seventh all-time at Oregon.

The '60s-style act of taking it to the streets did not immediately get the university to change its mind about wrestling. But the Kesey family is not giving up.

"One thing about wrestlers is if they get on their back, it's not over—it just got interesting," said Zane Kesey, whose father died in 2001. "You get fierce."

Head wrestling coach Chuck Kearney suggested that if Oregon had not had a wrestling team back in the 1950s, Ken Kesey might not have attended the university. And the course of literary history might have been different.

"Had he gone to Oregon State and wrestled, would he have written `One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' and `Sometimes a Great Notion' and all the great things he did?" Kearney asked. "It was a combination of this campus, this university, the education he received here and the sport of wrestling that came together and made him what he was and in my mind made the impact that he made."

Athletic director Pat Kilkenny made the decision to eliminate wrestling and bring back baseball, which he said could become a moneymaker for the university.

"Is this a final decision?" Kilkenny said. "It's America, so there are always opportunities to make changes. But our strong belief is our analysis was significant and powerful and conclusive, and we don't think this has changed since last July to today."

For wrestling enthusiasts, the solution might be to run out the clock.

Ron Finley, an Olympic wrestler and head wrestling coach at Oregon from 1970 to 1998, has gathered pledges of $2.3 million so far for the team, scholarships and a new practice center.

"Kilkenny says it's not coming back," Finley said. "He'll only be here a couple more years anyway. If it has to go away a few years, we'll keep fighting, get it back some way."

'Green Berets' author Moore dies at 82

HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Robin Moore, a nonfiction author best known for writing "The French Connection" and "The Green Berets," has died after a long illness. He was 82.

Moore died Thursday night at a hospital in southwestern Kentucky, said Dennis Monroe with Lamb Funeral Home.

Born Robert L. Moore Jr. on Oct. 31, 1925, in Massachusetts, he wrote several books under the name Robin Moore.

"The French Connection," published in 1969, was about a New York drug bust. It inspired a movie that won five Academy Awards in 1971, including best picture.

"The Green Berets," published in 1965, was made into a movie starring John Wayne in 1968. Moore also co-wrote "The Ballad of the Green Berets," which became the signature song of the Special Forces unit.

Moore spent time in Vietnam with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) to write the book, and his connection with the Green Berets endured after the book was written. In 2005 he and his wife, Helen, moved to Hopkinsville, which borders Fort Campbell, the sprawling Army post that is headquarters to a Green Beret group.

Maj. Gen. Gary L. Harrell, deputy commander of the Army's Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, called Moore a "devoted advocate" for the Special Forces and said his writings became textbooks for the Army's unconventional forces.

"They were both educational and inspirational and introduced the world to the Green Berets." Harrell said in a statement posted Friday on an Army Special Forces Web site. "He will be missed."

Moore's other books included "The Happy Hooker," which he helped write and was published in 1972.

In 1986, Moore pleaded guilty to selling fraudulent literary tax shelters. The government charged Moore published books and sold the royalty rights to promoters and investors at inflated prices based upon arbitrary and unrealistic values.

A complete list of Moore's survivors wasn't available Friday.

Stranger donates kidney to Atlanta girl

ATLANTA (AP)—The picture of the smiling little girl on the flier was more than Laura Bolan could take.

The 8-year-old on the pamphlet needed a kidney transplant, and Bolan knew she could help. She did a quick Web search on the surgery and talked it over with her husband. Then she made a phone call to offer one of her kidneys to Sarah Dickman.

The suburban Atlanta girl was born with the genetic disease juvenile nephronophthisis, which slowly destroys the kidneys. Without treatment, it can kill a child before the age of 15.

Bolan, 34, had never met Sarah when she agreed to donate the organ.

"It breaks your heart to know there's a little girl sick out there who you could help," Bolan said earlier this week.

The pair underwent successful surgeries Thursday at hospitals across the street from each other in Atlanta. Surgeon Dr. Thomas Pearson said both patients were doing well on Friday, and initial tests of Sarah's new kidney showed it was working normally.

Sarah was expected to be in intensive care for at least a day and then spend up to a week at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston. She said she was looking forward to being free from a dialysis machine so she can spend the night at her best friend's house.

And when doctors remove her catheter, she can take bubble baths again because there will no longer be the risk of infecting the skin around the tube.

Best of all, she can go to Kangaroo Bob's, a children's recreation center with inflatable slides, mazes and obstacle courses.

"I'll get to go there on my birthday because I won't have this anymore," she said, pointing to the catheter.

Bolan was expected to return home after a few days at Emory University Hospital. She first saw a flier about Sarah in September at the elementary school where two of her children are students. Sarah attends the same school.

Bolan knew she had the same blood type as the little girl, so she called the number on the flier that evening.

Sarah's parents, Lori and Joe Dickman, had added Sarah's name to a national waiting list for transplant recipients after learning that neither parent was a match to donate a kidney. The flier was just a shot in the dark.

The Dickmans received two calls from people interested in donating a kidney. Both were tested, and Bolan was the better match. The Dickmans were relieved because Sarah's condition was quickly deteriorating.

She was put on dialysis in September, the same month the flier went up. She often left school early because her failing kidneys made her exhausted and irritable.

"We definitely need more people like Laura in the world," Lori Dickman said.

Joe Dickman wants to add his name to living donor lists so that he can help someone else. It's the least he can do to repay Bolan for saving his daughter, he said.

"A thank-you doesn't fit for what she's doing," Joe Dickman said of Bolan. "She can call me at four in the morning for a gallon of milk. I don't care. I'm indebted to her for life."

Hollywood gets ready for Oscar arrival

LOS ANGELES (AP)—If there's anything Hollywood loves more than the spotlight, it's a glamorous party—and it doesn't get more glamorous than the Academy Awards.

As celebrities flock to Los Angeles from all over the world, the city itself is abuzz with all things Oscar. The Kodak Theatre swarms with activity as stand-ins and stars rehearse for Sunday's big show. Camera-toting tourists and film fans fill the Hollywood & Highland complex that surrounds the theater. Stylists flit about town gathering pricey jewels to bedeck the necks, earlobes, wrists and lapels of their red-carpet clients.

It all feeds the magic of one of the world's grandest pageants, the Academy Awards.

■ ■ ■

TALKING OSCAR: The 80th annual Academy Awards show promises lots of surprises and less than 3 1/2 hours running time, producer Gil Cates said Friday as he, director Louis J. Horvitz and film academy President Sid Ganis took questions from the press about Sunday's show.

Sitting beneath a clear plastic rain tent that shielded the red carpet and its occupants from drizzly skies, Cates promised a dry Oscar day.

"I'm confident the weather is going to be OK Sunday," he said, ignoring a current forecast to the contrary.

"If it rains, it'll be good for the flowers," added Ganis, who sat beside a bucket of yellow roses.

As the trio talked about the rain tent, red-carpet show host Regis Philbin popped in to say hello and to thank Cates for inviting him to "the biggest circus in town."

"I started the red carpet segment for KABC when I worked here in the '70s and it was a big hit," Philbin said. "We just took a camera down there and the red carpet was there, Army Archerd was in the stands calling out the names of the stars and one by one they came: Richard Burton, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly. ... It was the thrill of my life."

Viewers can also expect a thrill when they tune into the Academy Awards, Cates said, which will reflect Oscar's 80-year history.

Jack Nicholson and Keri Russell have been added to the roster of A-list presenters, he said, and the telecast will open with a 90-second film "that is arguably the most exciting piece of film that has ever opened an Oscar show."

Even though the year's nominated films haven't generated big business at the box office, the three Oscar honchos said they expect fans around the world will tune in to the program—especially since the Writers Guild of America strike caused the cancellation or retooling of other Hollywood kudo-fests.

"Not only have there not been any awards shows," said Ganis, "but I think there's a good solid buzz about the strike being over (and) everybody back to work."

AP

Actress Kristin Chenoweth rehearses the song "That's How You Know," from the film "Enchanted," during rehearsals for the 80th Academy Awards at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, Friday, Feb. 22, 2008. The Oscars will be presented on Sunday.

■ ■ ■

IRISH ALLIANCE: After running through his lines on the Kodak Theatre stage Friday morning, Colin Farrell joined a handful of stand-ins and other Oscar workers to watch a rehearsal of "Falling Slowly," the nominated song from the Irish indie film "Once."

Wearing a torn T-shirt topped with a vest and blazer, his shaggy hair tucked under a gray fedora, the Irish actor tapped his toes as the film's stars, Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova, played their original ballad.

Hansard, cradling the same beat-up acoustic guitar featured in the film, sat on a stool in front of Irglova's grand piano. The two shared a smile as the full sound of the Oscar orchestra rose up behind them.

When the song ended, Farrell bounded onto the stage to greet Hansard with a hug. Academy Awards producer Gil Cates chatted with the two Dubliners, and Farrell joked that he would "do some accent work tonight" so his Irish lilt would be show-ready.

"By Sunday I'll have the accent down," he said.

■ ■ ■

STARS IN SNEAKERS: They'll don designer tuxedoes and gowns on Sunday, but stars dressed down for weekday rehearsals at the Kodak Theatre.

Denzel Washington wore sneakers, track pants and a backward ballcap as he ran through his lines Thursday afternoon. Veteran stage manager Dency Nelson guided him through the two-minute rehearsal before sending him on his way with a friendly "See you Sunday."

A ponytailed, makeup-free Hilary Swank embodied superstar casual chic in a silky white blouse, skinny black pants and towering high heels. She stepped on stage, read through her lines and quickly disappeared into the Kodak commotion.

■ ■ ■

OSCAR NOMINATIONS EQUALS PARTY TIME: Everyone loves recognition from their peers, and actors, directors and film execs are no exception. That's why for many in Hollywood, Oscar week is party week.

Paramount Vantage toasted its nominees—best-actor favorite Daniel Day-Lewis, "There Will Be Blood" writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson and "Into the Wild" supporting actor Hal Holbrook, among others—with a private dinner-and-drinks soiree Thursday night at the week-old STK restaurant in West Hollywood.

John C. Reilly, Sissy Spacek, Maya Rudolph and celebrated cinematographer Roger Deakins joined the nominated guests, nibbling on tuna tartare, mini steak sandwiches and oversized french fries. Day-Lewis, wearing a tan leather jacket and a woven fedora, was all smiles as he shook hands with fans.

Fox Searchlight was set to fete its nominees—including "Juno" director Jason Reitman, screenwriter Diablo Cody and star Ellen Page—with a dinner Friday at the same new hotspot. The festivities continue Saturday with Jeffrey Katzenberg's annual "Night Before" party, which benefits the Motion Picture & Television Fund and typically draws an A-list crowd.

Miley Cyrus seat belt flap debated

NEW YORK (AP)—When Consumer Reports posted a blog last week criticizing Miley Cyrus for not wearing her seat belt in a new film, Hannah Montana Nation rallied in her defense. Before long, the posting had received nearly 200 comments (far more than the typical one or two)—and made national news.

"Absolutely we were caught off-guard," said Don Mays, who wrote the post. "Whether people agree or not with our analysis, at the very least, I would like them to understand the risk."

But anyone looking for car safety tips from Hollywood would be advised to avoid most movies. Immediately, one might write off the work of Bruce Willis, Steve McQueen and Burt Reynolds—not to mention avoid "Thelma & Louise" entirely.

Even aside from Hollywood's propensity for road rage, movies generally don't portray seat-belt usage. A study in 2001 found that only 30 percent of movies showed seat belts buckled.

Was Cyrus singled out?

"Absolutely," said Heather A. Jacobsen, a professor at the Saint Louis University School of Public Health and lead investigator of the 2001 study. "It is the norm for characters in movies to not wear a seat belt."

In her new 3-D Disney concert film "Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert," the actress and her father, Billy Ray Cyrus, are seen riding, not bucked up, in the back seat of a Range Rover.

Mays' post criticized Cyrus for not buckling up and thereby influencing her legion of young followers. It had a snarky title, too: "Note to Hannah Montana: Seat belts are necessary not an accessory."

AP

Miley Cyrus arrives at the 50th Annual Grammy Awards in this Feb. 10, 2008, file photo in Los Angeles.

Billy Ray Cyrus subsequently apologized: "We made a mistake and forgot to buckle our seat belts."

Mays said that Cyrus has a greater responsibility to her impressionable fans. To explain the issue's seriousness, he cited statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that people were not wearing their belts in 55 percent of passenger vehicle fatalities in 2006.

The effects of sex and violence in films, of course, have been an issue of debate for decades. The closer parallel, though, might be smoking.

Smoking on television and in movies has declined over the years, partly thanks to campaigns to drive it off screen. Just this week, the New York state Health Department took out full page ads in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal encouraging the movie industry to give movies with smoking an R-rating.

According to the Motion Picture Association of America rating board, the percentage of films that included smoking dropped from 60 percent to 52 percent from July 2004 to July 2006.

But the romantic portrayals of smoking (think Humphrey Bogart lighting Lauren Bacall's cigarette) don't exactly compare to the more utilitarian buckling up. No protagonist ever got the girl by flaunting state seat belt laws.

"It's not so much that people mimicked the behavior, but because films established that behavior as very normal and something everybody did," said Jacobsen.

That is out of line with the pattern of seat-belt usage by the public, which Jacobsen's study counted as about 70 percent. (In many states, it's the law to buckle up.) The reason for the discrepancy may be suggested in Billy Ray Cyrus' explanation.

"We got caught up in the moment of filming," said the country music star.

Family films typically give seat belts more attention. In 1995's "Toy Story," for example, even Buzz Lightyear buckles up with a belt nearly as big as he is. A 1997 study by Michigan State University found that one of the most seat belt-friendly movies was "Dead Man Walking" (1995), which depicts buckled-up drivers in five of the film's six driving scenes.

So how far should movies go in putting forth images of health and safety?

AP

Marc Anthony and his wife Jennifer Lopez pose together at "Movies Rock: A Celebration of Music in Film," in Los Angeles, in this Dec. 2, 2007, file photo.

Report: Lopez gives birth to twins in NY

NEW YORK (AP)—Jennifer Lopez gave birth to twins early Friday, making the singer and husband Marc Anthony the parents of a boy and a girl after one of pop music's most closely watched pregnancies.

"She's thrilled," Lopez's manager, Simon Fields, told The Associated Press. He said the babies were born "just after midnight this morning."

Fields confirmed that the girl arrived first, weighing 5 pounds, 7 ounces. "Her boy is 6 pounds even and arrived about 15 minutes later" at a Long Island hospital, he said. The location was not identified.

Ending months of speculation, Lopez confirmed her pregnancy at a Miami concert in November. Her father, David Lopez, told Telefutura's "Escandalo TV" earlier this month that the 39-year-old singer was expecting twins.

Lopez and Anthony, 38, married in 2004. The twins are her first children, and his fourth and fifth.

Attorney: Spears can visit young sons

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kevin Federline has agreed to give ex-wife Britney Spears visitation rights with their two young sons, his lawyer said Friday.

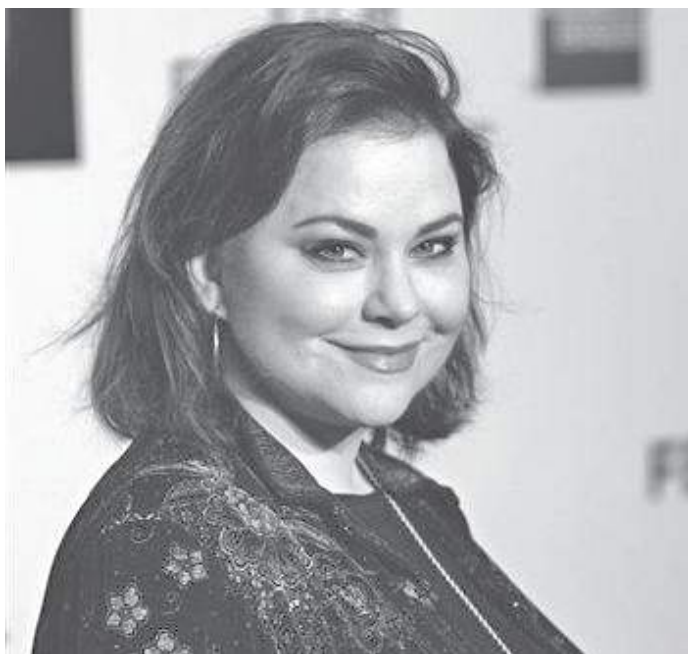
Federline attorney Mark Vincent Kaplan said in a statement the former couple has agreed to a modification of a court order that had stripped Spears of her visitation rights. The statement did not provide more details.

A court commissioner gave Kevin Federline sole physical and legal custody of their two little boys and suspended the pop star's visitation rights on Jan. 4.

Spears has not been allowed to see sons Jayden James, 1, and Sean Preston, 2, since an incident at her home that led to the first of her two hospitalizations in a psychiatric facility this year.

Spears and her estate were placed under a temporary conservatorship after she was taken to UCLA Medical Center on Jan. 31. Conservatorships are granted for people deemed unable to care for themselves or their affairs.

Delta Burke opens up about depression



AP

Delta Burke arrives a premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in this April 25, 2005, file photo.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—For the first time since entering a psychiatric hospital in January, Delta Burke is speaking out about her depression, saying she remembered having anxiety as early as kindergarten.

In a two-part "Entertainment Tonight" interview airing Thursday and Friday, Burke said she needed "an adjustment under a physician's care" after the five medications she was taking no longer worked. Now she's on two medications, Burke said.

By coming forward, Burke hopes to help remove the stigma surrounding depression. Burke said she would like people to pursue mental help the same way they might with another illness.

Burke's depression has at times been debilitating. One of her lowest moments came while she was starring in the long-running series "Designing Women."

"I was parked in the car in the hills with a gun and a bottle of Xanax beside me, trying to recover from harsh words said in the tabloids," she said. "I just wanted the pain to go away."

But she insisted she wasn't going to commit suicide, saying: "I didn't want to die. If I ever really wanted to be dead, I'd be dead."

Burke, who also struggles with hoarding, said she recognizes it's a problem.

"At one time I had 27 storage units. I don't have a big enough house!" she said. "My mom had it, it's my mother's fault. She saved the diaper I came home from the hospital in!"

Edie Falco signs on for Showtime series

NEW YORK (AP)—Moving beyond Carmella Soprano, Edie Falco has signed on for a Showtime comedy where she will play a New York City nurse who doesn't hesitate to tell her superiors off. Falco's character is said to have a personal life that is "precarious, unpredictable and demanding in ways that she is surprisingly not always prepared for."

Falco

Described as a dark comedy in the tradition of "Weeds," the series, which doesn't have a name yet, will be shot in New York. Showtime is hoping for a premiere sometime late this year.

Falco was nominated for a best actress Emmy six times for her role as the mob wife in HBO's "The Sopranos," and won three times.

"My time on `The Sopranos' was so rich and full," she said. "The challenge has been finding something else that would excite me. This character and the writing are truly thrilling."

The Black Crowes attack Maxim magazine review

NEW YORK (AP)—The Black Crowes are lashing out at Maxim magazine for reviewing the band's new album—apparently without actually hearing it first.

The review, published in Maxim's March issue, gives the Crowes' "Warpaint" a rating of two-and-a-half stars out of five.

"The writer—who has not heard the album since advance CDs were not made available—wrote what appears to be a disparaging assessment anyway, citing, `it hasn't left Chris Robinson and the gang much room for growth,'" said a statement on the band's official Web site.

The band's manager, Pete Angelus, said the magazine explained that its review an "educated guess."

"It speaks directly to the lack of the publication's credibility," Angelus said in a statement. "In my opinion, it's a disgrace to the arts, journalism, critics, the publication itself and the public. What's next—Maxim's concert reviews of shows they never attended, book reviews of books never read and film reviews of films never seen?"

A representative for the magazine would not confirm or deny to The Associated Press whether the writer actually listened to the album. Instead, Maxim released this statement in response: "Maxim will continue to provide our readers with information that is important to them, whether it is about fashion, lifestyle, technology, music, movies and more."

AP

Oscar hopeful Marion Cotillard reacts after she received a Cesar award for best actress for her portrayal of songstress Edith Piaf in the movie "La Mome" (La Vie en Rose), during the Cesars award ceremony in Paris Friday, Feb. 22, 2008.

Marion Cotillard gets best French actress

PARIS (AP)—France's film industry gave its coveted Cesar award for best actress to Oscar hopeful Marion Cotillard on Friday for her portrayal of French songstress Edith Piaf.

The award could be the start of a winning streak for Cotillard, who is nominated for a best actress Academy Award for her performance in "La Vie en Rose."

Cotillard was a favorite in the annual Cesar competition, comparable to the Oscars, after critics agreed that she captured the soul of France's queen of song in the film.

The award for best movie went to "La Grain et Le Mulet" (The Grain and the Mule), which centers on a Tunisian immigrant family in the southern French town of Sete. It took four Cesars, including a best director award for Abdellatif Kechiche.

He repeated a 2005 winning streak for his film "L'Esquive" (Games of Love and Chance), which won four Cesars.

The best actor Cesar went to Mathieu Amalric for "Le Scaphandre et le Papillon" (The Diving Bell and the Butterfly). He plays a French magazine editor whose stroke leaves him paralyzed in the adaptation of Jean Dominique Bauby's memoir.

Mother-in-law's helpful hints come across more as attacks

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: Have you any tips on how to deal with an emotional bully? My mother-in-law is insulting, but sneaky about it. She insists that she's "just trying to help." If I speak up, she says, "Why are you being so sensitive?" or, "I'm just being honest." She has criticized my parenting skills and chiseled away at my self-esteem more times than I can count.

Because she's my mother-in-law, it isn't easy to get away. I try to keep busy during holidays and family visits so she won't be able to catch up with me and insult me.

Defending myself doesn't help. If I try, she turns a deaf ear. I need some strong, but polite, comments to get her to back off. Please help.

UNDER ATTACK IN WEST VIRGINIA

DEAR UNDER ATTACK: Two can play the game of selective deafness. Has it occurred to you to simply tune the woman out? Just because a jackass brays does not mean you have to take the noise to heart.

If, however, you feel compelled to respond, then straighten your posture, look her in the eye and say, "Then I'm going to be honest with you, too. I'm doing the best I can. Your comments are hurtful, and unless you stop criticizing me, I'm going to spend more time with MY family during the holidays. Got it?" If that doesn't slow her down, do yourself a favor and follow through.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a 64-year-old woman who is proud to be Jewish. I know there is still anti-Semitism in the world. We go to Mexico every winter, and the number of Jewish people in our community there is very small.

At home I wear a Star of David on a chain around my neck, but when we're in Mexico, I feel self-conscious about it. We belong to a large organization in Mexico that is comprised of non-Jews. Should I wear it, and possibly be shunned because I'm Jewish, or leave it at home?

I know this may seem like a silly question, but I don't want to be discriminated against because I'm a Jew, yet I am proud of my heritage. Should I wear it in Mexico or not?

RACHAEL IN BUFFALO GROVE, ILL.

DEAR RACHAEL: Your question isn't at all silly. Religion is supposed to be a positive force. Those who use religion as an excuse to shun others are bigots.

You say you are proud of being Jewish. Your Star of David is part of who you are, so wear it. If people avoid you because of your religion, they weren't sincere friends to begin with, nor are they nice people, and you won't have lost a thing.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a 42-year-old woman who has been married for 16 years to a good man. My husband doesn't drink, smoke, run around or even curse. He's a good father and sometimes helps me with housework.

So please tell me why I cannot stand him anymore—his voice, his laugh and anything about him. I just want out, and I don't know why. I work many hours of overtime just so I won't have to go home. Please tell me what's wrong with me.

WANTING TO BE FREE

DEAR WANTING: You appear to have fallen out of love with your husband, or have forgotten what attracted you to him in the first place. You could also be having a midlife crisis.

The answer is not to run away or hide out at the office, but to remember why you married him and examine what's going on in your head, with professional help if necessary. Forgive the cliche, but the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the fence. Sometimes it's poison ivy.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

All job vacancy announcements will be published for two issues in each of two successive weeks.

1st position	**$13.00**
2nd position	**$5.00**
Succeeding positions	**$2.00**

These rates apply to all job vacancy announcements in Saipan that include corresponding benefits and which positions are all under the same company name and dba.

Newspaper clippings are also available for $.25 per copy.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

Apartment for Rent in Aslito. Fully furnished, 24 hrs water. Safe location. Call 256-3864/287-7769

FOR SALE - COMMERCIAL

Bud's Bar For Sell. $20,000 or best offer. You must see to appreciate. #898-4866/233-1113

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MAINTENANCE/BUILDING REPAIRER (SUN 1568)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free (1 or 2 duty meal); medical & workers compensation provided. Repatriation by employer. Contact: MISA Enterprises, Inc. @234-6900.

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1 ELECTRICIAN (SUN 1569)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Tropical Gardens Inc. dba Saipan Zoo @322-5711.

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1 CARPENTER (SUN 1570)
Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provide housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation provided. Contact: Pacific International Marianas Inc. dba Midway Motors @234-7524.

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1 A&P MECHANIC (SUN 1571)
Salary:$15.00-$20.00/hour. Benefits: Health insurance & workers compensation. Contact: Hyannis Air Service, Inc. dba Cape Air @671-475-543-3122 or 2275.

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2 INTERPRETER (SUN 1572)
Salary:$700.00/monthly. Benefits: Employer provided housing; self provided food; transportation free on designated pick-up point; medical and workers compensation employer provided. Korean speaking, reading and writes is a must. Contact: Rainbow Corporation dba Lim's Office/E&F Tours @234-6564.

2 TOUR COUNSELOR (SUN 1573)
Salary:$700.00/monthly. Benefits: Employer provided housing; self provided food; transportation free on designated pick-up point; medical and workers compensation employer provided. Korean speaking, reading and writes is a must. Contact: Rainbow Corporation dba Lim's Office/E&F Tours @234-6564.

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1 MAINT. REPAIRER, BUILDING (SUN 1574)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; employee provided food; medical & workers compensation employers provided. Contact: Glicerio D. Arago dba NCI Contractor @287-0487/233-2652.

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1 MAINTENANCE WORKER (SUN 1575)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Housing with a charge of $50.00/monthly; self provided food & workmen's compensation. Contact: Peter Micheal Tenorio dba Equitable Realty & Consulting Service. @234-6676.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (SUN 1576)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Friendly Finance Co., Inc. @234-6676.

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2 COUNTER SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0001)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing deductible; $100.00/food deductible; workmen's compensation & health company provided. Contact: D'Elegance Ent., Inc. dba D'Elegance Rest. @234-9227.

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1 MANAGER, RESERVATIONS (FSUN 0002)
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,200.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. dba Fiesta Resort & SPA Saipan @234-6412.

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1 SALES MANAGER (FSUN 0003)
Salary:$1,972.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

1 GUESTS RELATIONS SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0004)
Salary:$3.55-$5.37/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

1 PLUMBER (FSUN 0005)
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; personal leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

1 FOOD & BEVERAGE MANAGER (FSUN 0006)
Salary:$1,972.00-$2,500.00/monthly. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

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1 MANAGER (FSUN 0007)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: ER provide housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: EEA Corporation @288-6192.

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1 DRESS MAKER (FSUN 0008)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provide food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: BJF Enterprises Inc. @323-8181.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (FSUN 0009)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Norma M. Agana @234-9721.

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1 CARE GIVER (FSUN 0010)
Salary:$400.00/semi-monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: John & Shirley A. Wilson @288-1816.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (FSUN 0011)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; free food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Danilo E. Asiatico @288-4426.

1 COOK (FSUN 0012)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Danilo E. Asiatico dba MJ BBQ & Retail @288-1681.

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1 GEN. MANAGER (FSUN 0013)
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Global Ocean Divers Inc. @233-8157.

2 DIVING INSTRUCTOR (FSUN 0014)
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Global Ocean Divers Inc. @233-8157.

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1 MANAGER (FSUN 0015)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Thai Massage Inc. dba Massage Service @233-2441.

4 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (FSUN 0016)
Salary:$5.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Thai Massage Incorporated dba Thai Massage @233-2441.

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1 WEDDING CONSULTANT, SUPERVISOR (FSUN 0017)
Salary:$3.55-$10.90/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; $200.00/monthly allowance & $30.00/monthly allowance transportation; medical & workers compensation insurance provided by employer. Contact: Watabe Saipan, Inc. dba Watabe Wedding @235-9332.

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1 ELECTRICIAN (FSUN 0018)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: KP Company Ltd. @322-0007.

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1 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (SUNT 0001)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable & workers compensation insurance. Contact: Felipe L. Kalen dba Community Service Plus @322-0113.

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1 COOK (SUNT 0002)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Tai Hu Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

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1 FLORIST (SUNT 0003)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Keebentton Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

1 SUPERVISOR (SUNT 0004)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Keebentton Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

1 MERCHANDISE DISPLAYER (SUNT 0005)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Keebentton Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

1 BLDG. MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (SUNT 0006)
Salary:$3.65/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Keebentton Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

1 ADMIN. ASSISTANCE (SUNT 0007)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Keebentton Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

1 MAINTENANCE REPAIRER (SUNT 0008)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Keebentton Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

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1 MERCHANDISE DISPLAYER (SUNT 0009)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Commonwealth Pacific Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

1 MERCHANDISER DISPLAYER (SUNT 0010)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; workers compensation & medical. Contact: Commonwealth Pacific Int'l Inc. @233-2288.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (SUNT 0011)
Salary:$3.65/hour. Benefits: Flexible housing; flexible food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Full House, Inc. @233-2288.

1 SUPERVISOR (SUNT 0012)
Salary:$3.65/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Full House Inc. @233-2288.

1 MERCHANDISE DISPLAYER (SUNT 0013)
Salary:$3.75/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; medical & workers compensation. Contact: Full House Inc. @233-2288.

MANAGER (SUNT 0014)
Salary:$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workmen's compensation are provided by employer. Contact: S&BS Ent., Inc. @234-2155.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (SUNT 0015)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; self arrange transportation; workers compensation provided by employer & medical expenses. Contact: Asuncion Quitugua dba D'Green Flash Rest. @235-4728.

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3 WAITRESS/WAITER (SUNT 0016)
Salary:$3.55-$5.00/hour. Benefits: Medical coverage expenses; vacation leave (earned after 1 yr. of service); sick leave (earned after 90 days of service); compassionate leave; employee's discount & workers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. @234-7171.

Sampson out; IU players skip practice

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP)—Kelvin Sampson tainted the Indiana basketball program's cleancut reputation. Now the Hoosiers are hoping the fallout doesn't do any further damage.

Sampson agreed to Indiana's offer of a $750,000 buyout Friday, waiving his right to sue the university for further damages, and turning the program over to interim coach Dan Dakich.

The athletic department's response to an NCAA report charging Sampson with five major NCAA rules violations may create an even bigger mess for the 15th-ranked Hoosiers, starting with Saturday's game at Northwestern.

Some players threatened to sit out the game as a protest. However, athletic director Rick Greenspan, who asked for Sampson's resignation, said he expected the players to participate at Northwestern and the program to move forward after one of the darkest chapters in program history.

How quickly, or devotedly, the players' follow is still a mystery.

Senior captain D.J. White, guards Armon Bassett, Jordan Crawford and Jamarcus Ellis, and forwards DeAndre Thomas and Brandon McGee skipped Dakich's first practice Friday afternoon. By Friday night's scheduled walkthrough, Greenspan said most if not all of the missing players were back and he expects them to leave for Chicago with the rest of the team Saturday morning.

Sampson also offered players his support in a statement released by the university minutes before the official announcement was made. Sampson's two-year tenure at Indiana ended the same way it began, with an NCAA hearing scheduled for alleged rules infractions.

He took the Indiana job in March 2006 and two months later was penalized by the NCAA for making 577 impermissible phone calls when he was coaching Oklahoma.

Given the pending charges, many Indiana fans and some trustees thought it was a mistake to even hire Sampson. And when the phone calls and accusations continued, it only created more angst among the fan-base.

The second wave of charges emerged in October when a university investigation found Sampson and his staff made more than 100 impermissible calls while still under recruiting restrictions and that Sampson participated in at least 10 three-way calls, another violation of the NCAA's punishment.

Greenspan called the violations secondary, imposing a one-year extension of the NCAA's recruiting restrictions and pulling a $500,000 raise. The Hoosiers also took away one scholarship for the 2008-09 season.

What the NCAA found, however, was far more serious. The report, released last week, claimed Sampson provided false and misleading information to investigators from both the university and the NCAA, failed to meet the "generally recognized high standard of honesty" expected in college sports and failed to promote an atmosphere of compliance within the program.

The allegations unleashed a torrent of criticism, and many fans booed Sampson during introductions during the Hoosiers' next three games. University president Michael McRobbie then announced the university would take a second look at the charges, setting a Friday deadline for Greenspan to make his recommendation.

Sampson never had a chance.

Still, Greenspan worked long and hard to resolve the mess.

He met with the team Thursday night and worked in his office till nearly midnight. On Friday morning, he met briefly with Sampson in the coaches' office. A few minutes after Greenspan left the coach's office, Sampson walked down a ramp with his wife, Karen, went into another coaches' office was not seen again inside Assembly Hall.

If there was any doubt, it was virtually erased when players, managers, assistant coaches and the coach's son, Kelley Sampson, left a team meeting with sour expressions about midday.

AP

Indiana University coach Kelvin Sampson and his wife, Karen, walk down a ramp in Assembly Hall in Bloomington, Ind., Friday, Feb. 22, 2008. The university is expected to make an announcement on Sampson who is accused of making improper phone calls, then providing false and misleading information to investigators from both the university and the NCAA.

Just before practice started, the depth of the problems took on another face.

While Indiana star freshman guard Eric Gordon said he expected to play against Northwestern, White and other players never showed up.

When asked if they would skip Saturday's game, Greenspan said: "I assume there's always that chance, and I won't pretend to speak for our players. Much like any student-athlete, they develop a strong affinity with a coach and that's a tribute to coach Sampson."

Outside the locker room, there was relief.

The decision, helped by an anonymous donor's gift of $550,000 for the buyout, seemed to pacify those who wanted the stain of improprieties gone.

Sampson led the Hoosiers into the second round of the NCAA tournament in 2006-07 and had them in position to contend for a Big Ten title this season. He broke the school record for most consecutive home victories at the start of a career, eclipsing the mark set by revered coach Branch McCracken, earlier this season.

But his success on the court could not overshadow the accusations of what he did off of it.

The 45-year-old Dakich, once considered a possible successor to coach Bob Knight, will now get a chance to coach his alma mater. He is the former head coach at Bowling Green and a former assistant under Knight at Indiana. And he took the job vacated when Rob Senderoff resigned in early November. Senderoff was also implicated in the phone-call scandal at Indiana.

Dakich also was an assistant on Indiana's 1987 national championship team.

Assistant coach Ray McCallum, who the players wanted to take over, became assistant head coach. McCallum was a head coach previously at Ball State and Houston and has 25 years of coaching experience at the college level.

Neither Dakich nor McCallum were implicated in the latest NCAA allegations, and McCallum also was cleared of any wrongdoing while assisting Sampson at Oklahoma.

Without Sampson around, though, the Hoosiers are hoping for a clean slate.

NCAA restores Oklahoma's wins from 2005

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Oklahoma will have wins reinstated from the 2005 Holiday Bowl season after an NCAA appeals committee partially overturned a ruling in the infractions case involving former quarterback Rhett Bomar.

The NCAA Infractions Appeals Committee released a ruling Friday that Oklahoma should not have been found guilty of separate violations for failing to detect that football players were working at a Norman car dealership and failing to monitor those students' employment.

In overturning the violation related to detecting the players' employment, the appeals committee reinstated the Sooners' wins from their 8-4 season in 2005.

"This decision is a great thing for those individuals involved with our 2005 team," Sooners coach Bob Stoops said in a statement. "Most of the players on our current roster were not on that team, but I know those victories mean a lot to the players and coaches who were here at that time."

The appeals panel partially upheld a "failure to monitor" violation imposed against Oklahoma, stating that the university didn't use established institutional procedures that would have revealed the employment of 12 players at the dealership in summer 2005.

The NCAA infractions committee previously ruled that Oklahoma failed to collect earnings statements in a timely manner that would have revealed the players' employment. As a result, three players received about $17,000 in impermissible benefits for work they did not perform at the car dealership.

Oklahoma self-imposed scholarship reductions and took assistant coaches off the recruiting trail as sanctions for the violations that involved Bomar and former offensive lineman J.D. Quinn. Both players were also kicked off the team, with Bomar transferring to Sam Houston State and Quinn to Montana. The program disassociated itself with Brad McRae, the former manager of the car dealership.

However, the school objected to the NCAA erasing its wins from the season when the players were on the team, claiming that it was unfair to punish teammates who didn't break the rules. Oklahoma also argued that the violations wouldn't have been detected without the school's own investigation.

"While we are pleased with the findings by the NCAA Infractions Appeals Committee, we are most pleased for the 100 student athletes and coaches who played by the rules and worked their hearts out for a successful 2005 season," University President David Boren said in the statement.

The NCAA said in its news release that the "the university's cooperation was a significant factor in the ultimate determination of the violations," but the infractions committee did not acknowledge that in its decision.

"We fully appreciate and respect the process required in these matters," Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione said in the statement. "We are pleased that the NCAA recognized the university's approach in taking immediate and significant action upon our discovery of the violations and of the work and cooperation of the University of Oklahoma in the ultimate detection of the violations."

Oklahoma spokesman Kenny Mossman said Castiglione would not comment further on the report.

Suns send Celtics to third straight loss

PHOENIX (AP)— Amare Stoudemire scored 28 points and the Phoenix Suns gave Boston its first three-game losing streak of the season with a rugged 85-77 victory over the Celtics on Friday night.

The Suns got their first victory with Shaquille O'Neal in the lineup. They lost 130-124 to the Los Angeles Lakers in O'Neal's Phoenix debut on Wednesday night.

Steve Nash added 18 points, including a pair of late 3-pointers, and Grant Hill had 14 points and 13 rebounds to record consecutive double-doubles for the first time since Dec. 2-4, 2002. O'Neal had just four points but 14 rebounds as the Suns dominated the boards 50-32.

Kevin Garnett scored 19 points, Paul Pierce was 2-for-13 shooting for five points and Ray Allen scored 11 points and shot 3-for-12.

The Celtics never led while falling to 0-3 on their five-game trip through the West after going 16-0 against the Western Conference. Phoenix improved to 22-2 against the East.

The Suns played most of the game without Leandro Barbosa, who got a cut above the right eye on a shot from Pierce with 4:36 left in the game. The cut required three stitches and Barbosa did not return.

Boston trailed by as many as 16 in the third quarter. The Celtics cut it to nine early in the fourth quarter and seven in the final seconds.

Phoenix led by 13 at the break despite committing 15 turnovers in the game's first 17 minutes.

The Suns committed 11 turnovers in the first quarter but still led 24-13 because the Celtics shot 21 percent (5-for-24). O'Neal was scoreless had four turnovers in the quarter.

Boston started 2-for-14 as Phoenix went on a 15-0 run to build a 19-4 lead on Barbosa's layup with 5:39 to play. The Celtics got back in it with a 10-0 surge to cut it to 27-26 on Garnett's dunk 7:50 before the break.

Clippers 114, Jazz 104

At Los Angeles, Rookie Al Thornton scored 14 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and the Los Angeles Clippers shocked the surging Utah Jazz, 114-104, giving themselves back-to-back wins for the first time in 3 1/2 months.

Hawks 117, Golden State 110

At Oakland, Calif., Joe Johnson had 27 points and the Atlanta Hawks snapped a six-game losing streak with a 117-110 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

SuperSonics 99, Trail Blazers 87

At Seattle, Kevin Durant scored 17 points, despite sitting the entire fourth quarter, and the Seattle SuperSonics never trailed in a 99-87 win over the ragged Portland Trail Blazers.

Pistons 127, Bucks 100

At Auburn Hills, Mich., Chauncey Billups had 21 points and 12 assists to lead the Detroit Pistons to a 127-100 rout of the Milwaukee Bucks.

Cavaliers 90, Wizards 89

At Cleveland, LeBron James made two free throws with 7.8 seconds left as the shorthanded Cleveland Cavaliers, playing with just eight, had enough to beat the Washington Wizards 90-89.

Mavericks 99, Grizzlies 83

At Memphis, Tenn., Dirk Nowitzki scored 27 points and Jason Kidd had 15 assists in his second game for Dallas following a blockbuster trade to lead the Mavericks to a 98-83 win over the Memphis Grizzlies.

Bulls 135, Nuggets 121

At Chicago Ben Gordon scored 37 points, and the revamped Chicago Bulls delivered one of their best offensive efforts in years, overcoming a surge by Denver to beat the Nuggets, 135-121.

Kings116, Bobcats 115

At Charlotte, N.C., Brad Miller had 22 points and 14 rebounds and the Sacramento Kings overcame his late turnover to hold off Charlotte 116-115 in overtime in a game marred by a scary head injury to Bobcats forward Gerald Wallace.

Rockets 100, Hornets 80

At New Orleans, Yao Ming had 28 points and 14 rebounds, and the Houston Rockets won their 11th straight game, 100-80 over the New Orleans Hornets.

Phoenix Suns guard Steve Nash, right, dishes off the ball in front of Boston Celtics' Kendrick Perkins, left, during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game on Friday, Feb. 22, 2008, in Phoenix. AP

Woods wins duel with Baddeley

MARANA, Arizona (AP)— Tiger Woods made 12 birdies in 20 holes and needed every one of them Friday in a brilliant duel with Aaron Baddeley that sent the world's No. 1 player into the quarterfinals of the Accenture Match Play Championship.

Rarely has Woods played at such a high level, only to have another player match him step for step, birdie for birdie.

Baddeley, who shot 80 in the final round of the U.S. Open the last he played alone with Woods, was 1 up with three holes to play and twice had putts to end the match. A tough, 10-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole broke sharply below the hole, and Baddeley's 12-foot eagle putt on the 19th hole burned the left edge of the cup, giving Woods new life.

Woods' final birdie was from 13 feet, and it was good all the way. He removed his cap when the ball was still a foot away from dropping, and he looked relieved after winning his longest match in his nine years at this tense tournament.

"It was quality shot after quality shot," Woods said. "Matches like that are fun to be a part of."

Baddeley made 10 birdies, including five in a row to start the back nine, one of them conceded from 12 feet when Woods' tee shot plunked a marshal on the head and went into the sagebrush of the Dove Mountain desert.

What the Australian needed was an eagle on the 19th hole. Instead, he became the latest victim to Woods, who has twice produced late rallies in his bid to continue a streak of victories dating to early September.

"I played great, you know?" Baddeley said. "I made him have to win it."

Woods advanced to the quarterfinals for the fifth time in nine years. He will face K.J. Choi, a 1-up winner over Paul Casey.

Typical of this tournament, those two matches could not have been any more different.

Choi birdied the first three holes to build a big lead and was 3-up through seven holes after making an eagle. But he closed with 11 straight pars to outlast Casey.

The Americans, who started the tournament with a record-low 20 players, now have one player still remaining in each of the four brackets.

Woody Austin easily handled Boo Weekley, 3 and 2, to advance to play defending champion Henrik Stenson, who hung on to beat Jonathan Byrd. Stenson won his ninth straight match, the third-longest streak in the Match Play Championship.

Stewart Cink took advantage of sloppy play by Colin Montgomerie to deny the Scot valuable world ranking points, winning 4 and 2. Cink will play U.S. Open champion Angel Cabrera, who made six birdies on the front nine and beat Steve Stricker, 4 and 3.

Justin Leonard reached the quarterfinals for the first time and joined Cabrera as the only players to have not played the 18th hole after three rounds. Leonard dispatched of Stuart Appleby, 3 and 2, after running off five straight birdies at the turn.

Leonard will face Vijay Singh, who rallied from 2-down with two holes to play, then beat Rod Pampling on the 25th hole.

After a furious rally to survive the first round, and a far more comfortable win in the second round, Woods looked like he would have another short day of work when he won the first two holes with birdies against Baddeley.

What followed was match play at its finest, with both players giving away a few holes, and an explosion of birdies that made it clear to Woods and Baddeley that would be the only way to get ahead.

Woods hooked his tee shot into the base of a chollo cactus on No. 4 and tried to play out left-handed with an inverted wedge, but it was so far off line that it bounced off a knee-high wooden stake. One hole later, Baddeley returned the favor by pulling his second shot on the par 5 into a prickly pear bush, proving match play indeed can be dangerous.

Taking an unplayable lie, he tried to drop onto the flat cactus bush and have it roll into the desert sand. But when it stayed there, he stepped gingerly into the bush, and his shot hit the cactus.

The only other ugly shot was Woods' drive on the 13th, which tied the match.

"I just figured I had to make birdie to win the hole. If I didn't, I was going to lose the hole," Woods said. "It was that simple. And that's the way it felt. It almost turned out that way."

Baddeley took his first lead with a 12-foot birdie on the 14th, after Woods missed from 15 feet. From there, the Aussie played away from the dangerous slopes to the center of the green, making Woods beat him.

"He did all the things you were supposed to do when you have the lead," Woods said.

And Woods did what he usually does, starting with an 8-iron into 2 feet for birdie on the 16th to tie the match. And on they went, both reaching the par-5 17th in two for a putt at eagle, both finding the 18th fairway for a decent look at birdie on the 18th.

Woods could only think of one other match he played at such a high level, when he went the 36-hole distance with Mark O'Meara in the final of the World Match Play Championship in England in 1998.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	41	12	.774	
Toronto	29	24	.547	12
New Jersey	24	31	.436	18
Philadelphia	24	32	.429	18 1/2
New York	17	38	.309	25

Central Division

Detroit	40	15	.727	
Cleveland	31	24	.564	9
Chicago	22	32	.407	17 1/2
Indiana	22	33	.400	18
Milwaukee	20	35	.364	20

Southeast Division

Orlando	35	22	.614	
Washington	25	29	.463	8 1/2
Atlanta	22	30	.423	10 1/2
Charlotte	19	36	.345	15
Miami	9	43	.173	23 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	37	16	.698	
San Antonio	36	17	.679	1
Dallas	36	19	.655	2
Houston	35	20	.636	3
Memphis	14	41	.255	24

Northwest Division

Utah	35	20	.636	
Denver	33	21	.611	1 1/2
Portland	29	26	.527	6
Seattle	15	39	.278	19 1/2
Minnesota	11	42	.208	23

Pacific Division

Phoenix	38	17	.691	
L.A. Lakers	37	17	.685	1/2
Golden State	33	22	.600	5
Sacramento	26	28	.481	11 1/2
L.A. Clippers	19	33	.365	17 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Sacramento 116, Charlotte 115
Orlando 115, Philadelphia 99
Indiana 113, New Jersey 103
New York 103, Toronto 99
Cleveland 99, Washington 89
Detroit 127, Milwaukee 100
Chicago 135, Denver 121
Dallas 98, Memphis 83
Houston 100, New Orleans 80
Phoenix 85, Boston 77
L.A. Clippers 114, Utah 104
Atlanta 117, Golden State 110
Seattle 99, Portland 87

MATCH PLAY RESULTS

SECOND ROUND

Jones Bracket
Tiger Woods (1), United States, def. Aaron Baddeley (17), Australia, 20 holes.
K.J. Choi (9), South Korea, def. Paul Casey (25), England, 1 up.

Hogan Bracket
Henrik Stenson (13), Sweden, def. Jonathan Byrd (61), United States, 1 up.
Woody Austin (37), United States, def. Boo Weekley (44), United States, 3 and 2.

Snead Bracket
Angel Cabrera (14), Argentina, def. Steve Stricker (3), United States, 4 and 3.
Stewart Cink (22), United States, def. Colin Montgomerie (59), Scotland, 4 and 2.

Player Bracket
Justin Leonard (50), United States, def. Stuart Appleby (31), Australia, 3 and 2.
Vijay Singh (10), Fiji, def. Rod Pampling (58), Australia, 25 holes.

By The Associated Press

The Week in Sports

Marceau's withdrawal eclipses title week in sports

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The defending champion SaipanCell Patriots pose for a group shot after their recent victory in the Majors division of the Saipan Little League.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Major League's Team Rubak manager Dennis Renguul, center, accepts a check of $1,250 from Bridge Capital, LLC loan officer Jon A Anderson at Bridge Capitals office at Marina Hts. Business Center. Team Rubak will use the money to pay their entrance fee and purchase their uniforms in the upcoming SML season. Others in photo are Taylor Watanabe, Poland Masaharu, Acia Blesch, Leo Bobai, Ray Renguul, Payton Sakuma and Kuich Damian.

JON PEREZ

Team Freedom Air representative Frank Cruz, second left, receives the pennant trophy from CNMI Softball Association officials.

BOYS

JON PEREZ

Beach Boys pose with their trophies after finishing second to D&Q Spam in the CNMI Business Slow-pitch Softball League.

JON PEREZ

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Olivier Marceau's decision to skip the 2008 edition of the XTERRA Saipan Championship eclipsed what have been a title week in sports with teams and individuals winning their respective events.

Marceau, a four-time XTERRA Saipan champion, will skip the March 8 race to concentrate more in a 2008 Beijing Olympic Games triathlon-qualifying event for the Switzerland national team.

Marceau now joins three-time XTERRA Saipan champion Jamie Whitmore and 2007 Tagaman winner Julie Dibbens as professionals who will not be joining the 2008 Sportsfest.

Several teams and individuals, however, celebrated the week with titles in tow starting off with eight local netters winning their respective divisions in the 2008 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament.

Crowned winners were Ji Hoon Heo (men's singles), Mayuko Arriola (women's singles); Fernando Cajigan (men's Over-40); Benjie Decena (boys' 18-and-under); Rafael Jones (boys' 13-and-under); Theecel Minor (girls' 13-and-under); Chris Cajigan (boys' 9-and-under); and first-timer Tammy Ackerman (girls' 9-and-under).

"Badd" Brad Palacios defeated Matai Charley in the main event of Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar with 16 other fighters showcasing their mixed martial arts skills and techniques.

Other winners were J.D. "Out" Reyes, Shane Alvarez, Gino Asanuma, Lyle Deleon Guerrero, Perry Takai, J.J. Mality, Ron Chisato, Tom Kim, Chris Layug, A.J. Cepeda, Stan Iakopo, Joji Matsunaga, Alex Takeao, Joe Rabauliman, Jeff Norita, and Nate Flores.

D&Q Spam, meanwhile, completed its climb on top of the CNMI Business Slow-pitch Softball League sweeping Beach Boys, 18-8 and 18-12.

Other teams that competed were M.V. Reyes Catering, Freedom Air, POI Aviation, Jets, Joeten Rangers, and DFS.

JON PEREZ

Matai Charley keeps "Badd" Bradley Palacios in a head- and leg-lock in their main event match in Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar.

Olivier Marceau of Switzerland runs along the trail leg of the XTERRA Saipan Championships.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Raymond Zapanta and Elena Soll crowned themselves as the Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes with Raphael Zapanta winning the Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament.

In Rocball, Evenflow completed a come-from-behind win to beat No-Use in their best-of-three finals series in the 2007-2008 World Organized Rocball Community League.

Saipan Swim Club's Cooper Graf, Sarah Johnson, Blair Nichols, and Junior Pamaran returned from its Cairns, Australia trip with 12 medals after competing in the Far North Queensland Long Course Swimming Championships.

Graf won two silver (200m freestyle and 100m breaststroke) and two bronze (100m butterfly and 100m backstroke); Johnson won a gold (200m freestyle) and two silver (100m freestyle and 100m backstroke), Nichols won a silver (100m backstroke) and bronze (100m and 200m freestyles), and Junior Pamaran won two bronze (200m freestyle and 100m breaststroke).

Other members of the team were 10-year-olds Victoria Chentsova and Abigail Martinsen, 13-year-old Lester Lapuz, and 14-year-old Michael Moran Jr.

MV Gloria II captain John T. Sablan and his crew made up of Ray Guerrero, Tom Diaz, and Beltau "Bird Island" Palacios bagged the top prize in the 2008 Wahoo Jackpot Derby after reeling in a 38.15-lb wahoo.

JON PEREZ

Ji Hoon Heo watches the direction of his shot in his semifinal match against Nicolas Son in the men's singles of the Coconut Classic.

Benjie Decene of Tinian prepares to make a forehand return in his 18-and-under finals match against Russell Buenaventura in the Coconut Classic.

JON PEREZ

Marceau's withdrawal eclipses title week in sports

Olivier Marceau's decision to skip the 2008 edition of the XTERRA Saipan Championship eclipsed what could have been a title week in sports with teams and individuals winning their respective events. 25

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Sampson out; IU players skip practice

Kelvin Sampson tainted the Indiana basketball program's clean-cut reputation. Now the Hoosiers are hoping the fallout doesn't do any further damage. 25

SML fee due tomorrow

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Saipan Major League coordinator Tony Rogolifoi is reminding the eight participating teams in the 3rd Annual Budweiser-SML that the entrance fee for the 2008 season is due on or before tomorrow's opening.

The entrance fee for this season is $800 and checks can be made payable to SML.

Rogolifoi said the Budweiser-SML season opens on Monday, Feb. 25, with the defending champion Tanapag Falcons going up against the Tigers at 6:30pm at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

He said half of the eight participating teams are already paid in full while the other half are not yet completely paid and promised to settle their dues on or before Monday.

"We are definitely opening on Monday. This week will be the final payment for the entrance fee. Teams have assured me before Monday they will be paid," Rogolifoi said.

He added that they would still allow teams to play even if they failed to pay on or after Monday. "We will let them play on the condition that they pay up before the season ends otherwise all their games will be forfeited."

Rogolifoi said all teams assure him that before Monday they already have sponsors and the rest will settle their dues. "I gave them one month to look for sponsors, which they did."

Six other teams will also try to stop the Falcons' title defense this year. Aside from the Falcons and Tigers, the other competing teams are Kabur (formerly known as Rubak), Rock Steady (Bud Kings), Ford Rangers, Korean Dreams, Komoro, and D-9ers.

A ninth team, the Young Guns, was supposed to join but pulled out at the last minute for unknown reasons.

Games in the Budweiser-SML will be played every Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 6:30pm at the FMP Field. Tuesdays and Thursdays are reserved for make up matches in case of rain delays.

"The Tuesday and Thursday games are not yet final. I've heard that the Little League would also be using the field on those days," said Rogolifoi.

The Falcons are expected to field the same championship-winning team next season, while the Masters, now known as the Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers, hope their recent victory in the Masters Baseball League would carry over in the SML's regular season.

For more information, call Rogolifoi at 288-3515.

JON PEREZ

Jesus Norita, left, of the Tanapag Falcons and the Tigers' Ben Duenas will lead their respective teams in their campaign in the upcoming Budweiser-Saipan Major League season.

De Guzman wins Presidents' Day Poker

By CLARISSA DAVID
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A total of 23 individuals participated in Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino's third installment of "Island Style" Texas Hold'Em Poker last Presidents Day weekend.

The players hailed from different places, including Guam, Saipan, Japan, and Korea.

Besting the rest of the participants was Renato de Guzman of Guam. De Guzman earned for himself a total of $ 4,500.

Second and third place winners, who wished to remain anonymous, took home $ 2,250 and $ 750, respectively.

The winners were also awarded glass trophies.

Tournament director Tony Jackson said that they were expecting about 30 to 40 participants for the tournament. He said that it was a low turnout in spite of the weekend festivities on Tinian, but added that the nonappearance of their regular patrons from Guam might be attributed to the canceled flights of Freedom Air.

CLARISSA DAVID

Renato de Guzman of Guam holds up his winning hand while posing with his winnings in Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino's third installment of "Island Style" Texas Hold'Em Poker last Presidents Day weekend.

Jackson also added that the gaming concessions in Guam affect them somehow. "But we have Guam patrons who still come here to play on a regular basis."

Introduced in February 2005, the Texas Hold'Em Poker Tournament has since become one of three annual events at the TDHC, and "Island Style" is one of its themes. The two other events are the Baccarat Challenge and the Blackjack Championship.

Poker enthusiasts can look forward to two other Texas Hold'Em Poker tournaments: the Asia Pacific Poker Championship (APPC) scheduled on Memorial Day weekend (May 24 and 25) and the "Can You Weather the Storm?" No-Limit Hold'Em slated for Labor Day weekend (Sept. 1 and 2).

Entry fee for the "Island Style" Texas Hold'Em Poker Tournament was at $350, including commission. The prize pool was at $ 7,500.

Zheng reaches zenith anew

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Zheng Jian Qing reversed the tables on defending champion Victor "Hawk" Hocog in Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament last Feb. 15 at the Garapan watering hole and sports bar.

After losing to the burly and affable Chamorro pool ace last Feb. 9, Zheng returned the favor with a 4-3 victory.

In final game, Zheng broke by pocketing the 1-ball and ran the first five balls before making an error on the preparation for the 7-ball.

Zheng made a kick shot on the 7-ball, which turned out well for him since the cue ball hid behind the 8-ball.

With no option, Hocog had to shoot a one-rail kick shot which resulted in opening up the 7-ball to the cue ball and giving Zheng a chance to run the last three balls—7-8-9—giving him the championship.

Zheng went home with $40, while Hocog settled for the $20 consolation prize.

In the first round, Hocog advanced by beating Erwin Gomez, 4-2. Zheng joined him shortly after disposing of Robert Sanciangco in the same score, 4-2. Luis "Predator" Fajardo and Rico Montano enjoyed byes in the opening round.

Hocog smoked Montano in the second round, 4-0, while Zheng zapped Fajardo, 4-1, to arrange the championship duel.

Zheng, who is Top Pool Bar owner and manager, is inviting all pool players on island to join them for their 9-ball tournament every Saturday. Entrance is $10, which gives players the chance to practice for free on a regulation pool table before the tournament.

Companions of players at the tournament also get free time on Top Pool Bar's latest Karaoke system that plays four different language and uses a flat screen HD TV.

Top Pool Bar Professional 9-Ball Billiards Tournament is held every Saturday and the entry fee is $10.

The format is a race to four games. The venue's 8-ball tournament, meanwhile, has been moved to Thursday with also a $10 entry fee. The 8-ball competition uses a double-elimination format. Both tournaments follow Billiards Congress of America rules.

The sports bar is reminding interested 8- and 9-ball players that early birds get a chance to practice for free on any of Top Pool Bar's full-size billiard tables an hour before the competition.

Top Pool Bar, located along Hotel Street Garapan a stone's throw away from the Paseo de Marianas, is as spacious as it is modern and boasts of two 9-1/2-by-5-foot tables usually found in professional tournaments abroad.

For more information on the ongoing 9-ball weekly competition, call Zheng at 287-7676 or check out the competition's website at www.saipanero.com/bars/toppoolbar.